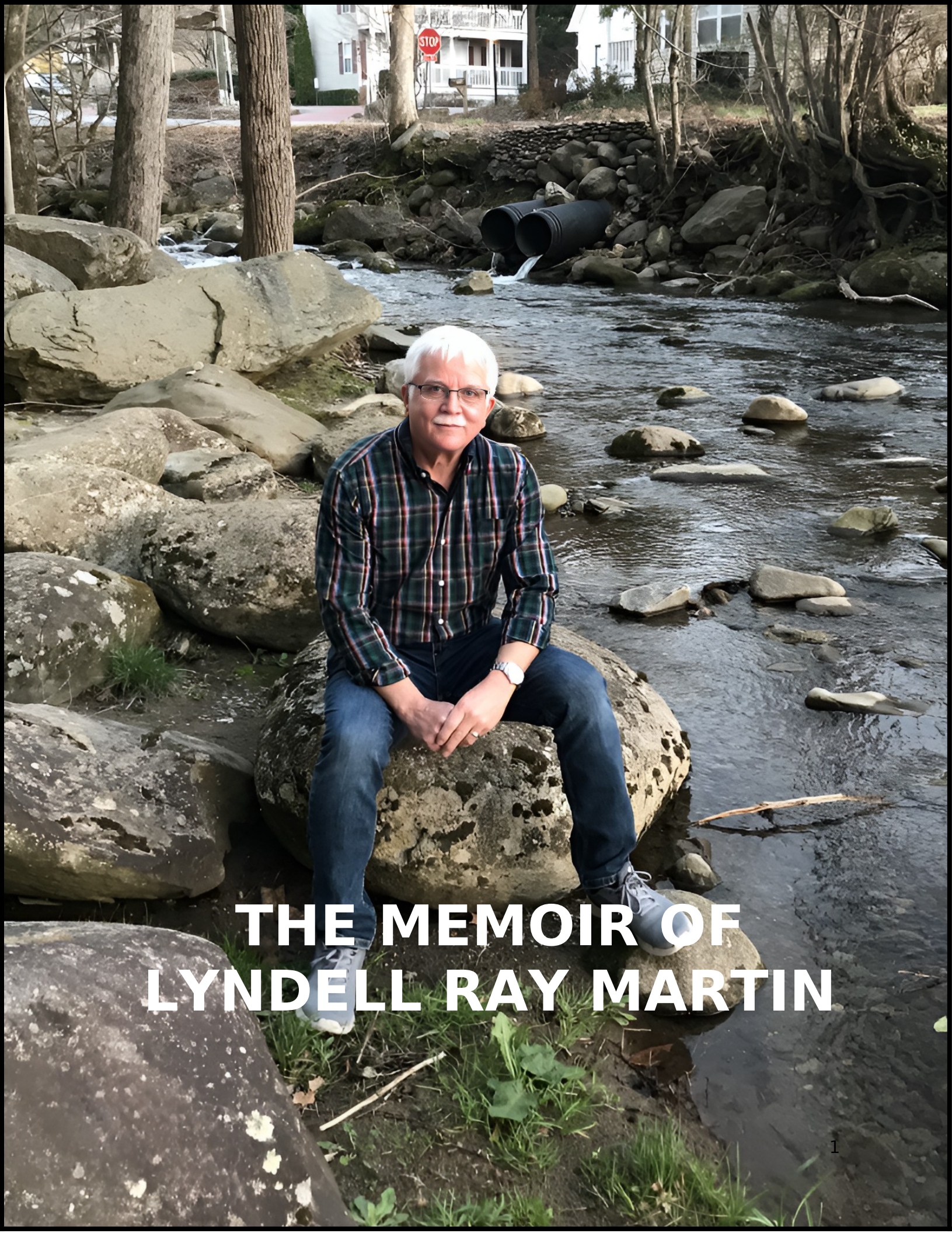


THE MEMOIR OF LYNDELL RAY MARTIN

THE MEMOIR OF
LYNDELL RAY MARTIN
A LIFE SET TO MUSIC

©2023

~

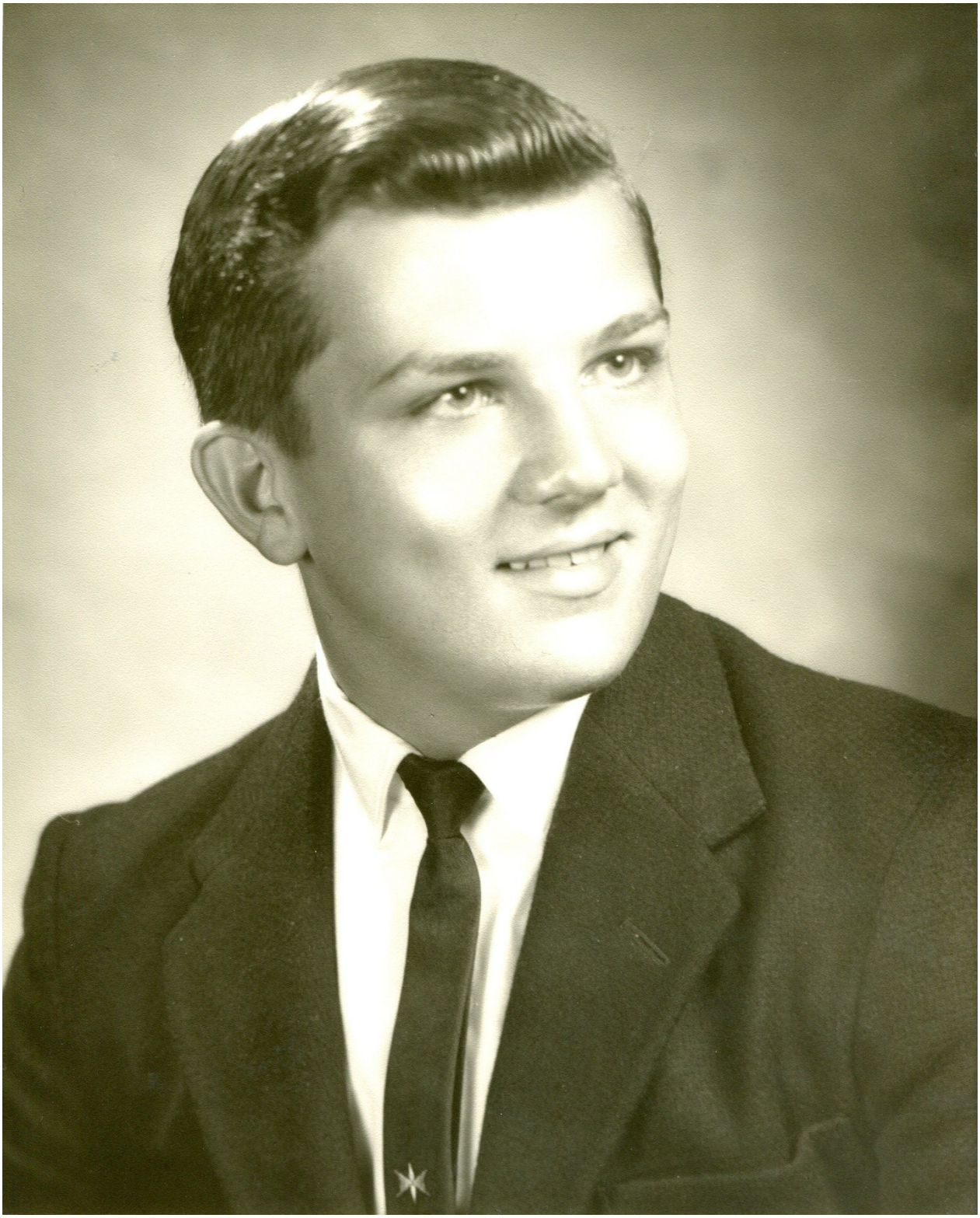
COVER PHOTO BY ROBERTA MARTIN
TAKEN IN GATLINBURG, TN
MARCH 2023

CONTENTS

Notes to the Reader	6	Prologue	7
The Early Years	9	My Childhood Home	10

My Non-Musical Family 11 Grade School 11
Pop Music 12 The Dog Trilogy 12
Déjà vu 13 Thriftiness 13
Our Chicago Vacation 14 Rheumatic Fever 15
Vacation Bible School 15 The Playboy Problem 18
Faith, Hope and Love 18 Family Matters 19
The 60's 19 A Beatle In Benton 20
High School 21 My First Job 22
My First Tape Recorder 22 My Two Front Teeth 22
Your Fired! 23 Help! 23
Mellow Yellow 23 Motorcycles 24
Pneumonia 25 Earthquake! 25
Man On The Moon 26 The College Years 27
Getting My Wings 29 Living In Evansville 30
Love and Marriage 30 Working At Sunbeam 31
Our First Home Purchase 33 Audio Technology Degree 34
Miranda Lynn Martin Is Born 34
Traveling For Sunbeam 34
Kidney Stones 35 Death In The Coal Mines 35
Back To Harrisburg 36 Working For Peabody 36
This Is The FBI 38 Building Our New House 39
Sound Financial Advice 40 Jason Daniel Martin Is Born 43
Answered Prayers 43 The Father of Lies 47
Becoming A Deacon 49 A Death and a Dream 49
About The Music 52 More Music 55
John Robert Bayne 56 Visitation Ministry 57
Mandi Excels 57 I Went To Cut A Tree 59
The Game In The Hall 60 Computers & The End Times 60
A Terrible Tragedy 62 Uncle Willie Wilson 63
More Songs & A Deep Valley 63 Mandi &
Jason Invite Jesus In 65
The Muse Returns 68 Telephone Ministry 70
The Music Continues To Flow 71 The
Layoffs 78
Ninety Miles To Nowhere 79 My Inventions 83
Songs And Poems 83 Mandi And Wade 88
3 Warnings & More Songs 88 I Talked
To An Angel 89
A Difficult Year For Jason 94 Cancun, Mexico 95
Jade Raven Ratliff Is Born 95 Christmas Isn't Christmas Without You 96
The Music Stops 96 1999 - A Year Of Huge Change 97
Baleigh Danielle Martin Born 100 Tristan Gage Ratliff Is Born
100
September 11, 2001 101 My
New Career 101
Colorado Calls 103 A Big Move 104

Keenan Daniel Martin Is Born 105
My Bible Project 106
Diabetes 107
Jalyn Sue Martin Is Born 110
My Deep Interest In Physics 113
Jason Is Diagnosed With PTSD 117
Tornado! 117
Kendall Bayne Martin Is Born 118
My Retirement 119
Trip To Washington, DC 119
Allie 121
Back To Colorado 121
Mediastinitis 122
Tristan And I Visit Chicago 122
Mom's Devastating Fall 124
Beautiful City of Brotherly Love 125
Restless Leg Syndrome 126
Did You Paint That? 126
Sleep Apnea 128
Total Solar Eclipse 128
Mysterious Events 129
Infinity And Eternity 130
Briar Lynn Smith Is Born 131
Mom Went To Be With Jesus 131
2,250,000,000 132
Dora's Death 132
The Covid-19 Pandemic 133
Psoriasis 136
Dad's World War II Book 137
The Oregon Trail 138
A Strange Thought 139
Gatlinburg, Tennessee 139
Yellowstone & The Grand Tetons 140
Trigger 140
Missouri And The Ozarks 141
War Breaks Out In The Holy Land 141
A Painting For Jade 142
North To Alaska 142
Closing Thoughts 143
Addendums Note 144
Appendix A - 100 Song Titles 145
Appendix B - Poems & Writings 149
Appendix C - Paintings 157
Appendix D - Abbreviated Genealogies 161
Appendix E - Pictures 173
Appendix F - Selected Sheet Music TBD
Appendix G - Adendums TBD



Lyndell Ray Martin - 1968

NOTES TO THE READER

I have attempted to accurately report the timing and chronology of all events recorded in this book. Although memory tends to fade thru the years, I believe most events are close to being in the proper order and placed at the correct time. I have included some advice in the book from time to time. My hope is that you will learn from my experiences and profit from them. My wish is that you will learn from my mistakes and avoid them. There will probably be sections of the book that are not of interest to you. If so, don't feel bad about skipping them. You can always come back later. I hope you will enjoy the read. I have attempted to make it an interesting one.

When you see a section that begins with two asterisks, (**), this indicates that the narrative has been interrupted. It may indicate a memory from the past, or a brief jump to the future. In some cases, it may be information that did not fit smoothly into the narrative. In other cases, there will be advice for you to consider. Three asterisks, (***) will indicate the end of the section, and a return to the narrative.

When descriptions beneath group photos list individuals, they will be listed from top left to bottom right. The same convention is used for groups of photos. (See appendix E)

While music is the main theme of the book, I have also included certain major events that are not related to music, but which nevertheless have been life changing. Some of these events have also had a profound effect on my descendents. Suppose, for example, that I had decided to move to Chicago when I was offered a job there. Suppose that making that decision had changed whom I married. You, if you are my blood descendent, would not be alive and reading this book. Are these life choices preordained, or simply a matter of free will? These are deep questions. I wish I had the answers. Let's talk about them when I see you in heaven. Then we will know more.

I will attach CD's inside the back cover of the printed version of this book, (if one becomes available). Please keep them there. They contain many of my better songs. The same songs, plus many others, are available online at Audio.com. You don't need an account to listen to them. If you want to download the songs, you can sign up for a free account. **To listen, go audio.com/lyndell-martin. Be sure to put the dash between lyndell and martin.**

The website **archive.org.** contains a PDF version of this book, which can only be read online. There is also a Microsoft Word (.docx) version of the book there. It can be downloaded for reading, offline. (The Word version

cannot be read on the website.) You will also find a variety of other items on the archive.org site. They include sheet music, personal poems, an audio recording of my dad telling his World War II story, dad's WWII book, a Bible expose and much more. To find these items, please read the following 6 steps **all the way through** before proceeding:

1. Go to the website Archive.org
2. Ignore the "Wayback Machine" search box, if the website still features it.
3. Find the other search box and click inside. (You may have to scroll down to find it.)
4. Select "search metadata" below the search box, if It's not already selected.
5. In the search box, type **LYNDELLMARTIN@YAHOO.COM** and hit enter.
6. All my files should appear. Find the one you want and click on it.

PROLOGUE

I arrived on earth the night of Friday, December 8th, 1950, having been born into the family of Herman and Tessie Ward Martin. My mom said there was a heavy snow on that night. She remembered snow coming in through holes in the floorboard of the car as dad was driving us to the hospital. At that time, they were living on Blueberry Hill, which is located on the north side of OLD Route 13, six miles east of Harrisburg's town square. Harrisburg Hospital was located on Main Street, one block north of the town square. It no longer exists. The name recorded on my birth certificate was Lindell Ray Martin, but someone marked through the i and replaced it with a y, making my name Lyndell. That's how I've always signed my name. My dad nicknamed me Buddy. I regret that I never learned the reasons behind my names. My sister Patricia, (Pat), was born three years and one day before me on December 7, 1947. My brother Leslie, (Butch), was born about a year and four months after me, on April 1st, 1952.

Not too long after my birth, mom and dad bought 20 acres of land directly across the road from the house where dad was born and raised. For a time, we lived in a one-room smokehouse on the property while dad was building the house we grew up in. I believe he had to tear down the old house first. As of this writing in January of 2023, the house and smokehouse are still standing at 2225 Willow Grove Road, in the community of Walnut Grove, approximately five miles south of Harrisburg, Illinois. My wife Roberta, (Birdie), and I now live next door to the house I

was raised in. Our address is 2285 Willow Grove Road. The coordinates are 37°40'35"N 88°33'37"W.

My dad's mother was Martha Ethyl Duncan Martin. She died on October 27, 1950 at the age of 54, due to complications from diabetes. Mom was in her eighth month of pregnancy with me at the time, so I never knew Grandma Martin. Dad's father, Elmer, lived to be 75. He passed away on November 25, 1960. Grandpa Elmer would come over and visit us occasionally but he didn't interact with me much that I can recall. I remember that he had tobacco stained hands from rolling his own cigarettes. Grandpa and Grandma Martin lived across the road from us, but that house no longer exists. As I previously mentioned, my dad grew up there. Elmer and Martha Martin are buried in Spring Valley Cemetery on Spring Valley Road, which is situated to the south, off of Route 34, half way between Mitchellville and Rudiment. The coordinates are 37°37'43"N 88°30'29"W.
My mom's father, Everett Ward, passed away on August 14, 1957 at the age of 76. I was only six years old then, and I don't have any firm memories of him. Grandma Pearl Langford Ward passed away on January 18, 1963 at the age of 77. This was a month after I turned 12. Up until about 1955, she and grandpa lived about a mile and a half southeast of our house, in the small community of Jenny Ridge. Around 1955, their homestead was taken over by a strip mining company and they were forced to move. I can barely remember visiting the old homestead at Jenny Ridge and playing in their front yard. That house no longer exists, having been torn down by the strip mines. The approximate location of the house was 37°39'26"N 88°33'08"W.

When the strip mine took over, Grandpa and Grandma Ward moved to a house in Harrisburg located at 32 West Sloan Street. That house burned on November 6, 1965, almost three years after grandma passed away on January 18, 1963 aged 77. My uncle Joe was living there alone at the time and he died in the fire. He was only 51. I still remember being awakened in the middle of the night by a phone call. Mom answered the phone and cried out. "Joe's house is on fire and they don't know if he's still in it or not." To this day, I seldom hear a phone ring without praying, "Lord, Please let everything be alright." That's how hard it struck me. Everett and Pearl Ward are buried in Walnut Grove Baptist Church Cemetery in the community of Walnut Grove. The coordinates are 37°40'22"N 88°33'56"W.

Both of my parents are also buried at Walnut grove Cemetery. Dad passed on June 9, 1999 aged 79 and mom passed on January 14, 2019 aged 96. Birdie and I have a burial lot at Sunset Garden Cemetery, which lies south of West Ogara Street in Harrisburg. The coordinates are 37°43'47"N 88°33'25"W.

As I look back, it seems to me that grand-parenting must have been different in those days. None of my grandparents interacted with us kids much. At least, not that I can remember. Maybe it was just our family, or maybe it was a sign of the times. My grandparents all lived through the great depression of the 1930's and that may have had something to do with it. I don't really know. However, I do know that I missed out on being close with my grandparents. That is a mistake I've tried not to repeat with my own grandchildren. I highly encourage you to spend lots of time with your children and your grandchildren. Get down on the floor and play with them. Look them square in the eyes and tell them how much you love them. Impart your wisdom to them. Tell them about God.

While the above information is brief, I trust it will be of interest to my descendents who read this memoir in the years, and possibly decades to come. Rest assured that I have prayed for each of you. I have prayed for all of my present and future descendants many times. The most important advice I can give you is this. Follow Jesus.

May God richly bless you!
Lyndell R. Martin
January 12th, 2023

THE EARLY YEARS

When I was just a little guy, there was an incident which resulted in my Aunt Syble saving my life. She was one of mom's older sisters, married to Herb Gullet. They lived in the house directly north of us, having bought an acre of ground from mom and dad when they married. Uncle Herb told me that, when he was a baby, his mom laid him on the floor in front of their fireplace one day and a hot coal fell out onto his hand. By the time she got to him the skin on the back of his left hand had melted and drawn two of his fingers and his thumb back until they fused with the back of his hand. In those days, the doctors couldn't fix it, so he lived his whole life like that. Concerning Aunt Sybil saving my life, she told me that she was standing in her front yard one day, and happened to see me playing in our driveway behind the back wheel of our car. Then she saw mom come out and get in the car. Mom hadn't seen me and would have backed over me, but Aunt Sybil screamed and got her attention. She saved a little boy's life that day…. her and God.

One of the things I remember about Uncle Herb was that he chewed tobacco. He carried a block of it with him and every once in a while he'd pull it out and cut off a chunk with his knife. I was watching him one day

and that tobacco just looked so good to me that I asked him if I could have some. I was maybe five years old. He smiled real big and said, "Sure Bud! Here you go!" He cut off a piece and handed it to me. I popped it in my mouth and started chewing. I imagine the look on my face must have been priceless, because that was the worst stuff I'd ever tasted! I started gagging and spit it out. Uncle Herb just laughed and asked me if I wanted some more. He was a great uncle! Dad used to call him Uncle Buzzy. I asked him why one day and he said it was because uncle Herb was always buzzing up and down the road in his car, going somewhere.

There was another incident that I remember from when I was only 4 or 5 years old. I had gotten into trouble for something or other and mom had punished me. I decided I was going to run away from home. I gathered a few toys and headed out the back door. I had no idea where I was going to go. However, when I came around the corner of the house, mom was standing there with a big smile, here arms stretched out toward me. I was so relieved that I dropped my toys and ran to her, crying. It funny how acts of kindness like that will stay with a little fellow. Decades later, when we were laying mom to rest, I recounted that story to the congregation at her funeral service.

For the most part, life growing up in post war America was good for a young boy like myself. Millions and millions of young men had returned home from serving in World War 2, and many of them were yearning to get married and have a family. The post war "baby boom" had begun. I am one of those "baby boomers". The depression era of the 1930's was now over. America's huge material investments in the war effort had put millions of Americans back to work. We had won the war and America was once again a confident young nation on the move.

MY CHILDHOOD HOME

Our house was modest but comfortable. However, we did not have many of the modern conveniences that most Americans take for granted today. Our 5 room home consisted of a living room, a kitchen, a utility room and two bedrooms. Mom and dad shared one bedroom. Butch, Pat, and I shared the other. Our bedroom was only big enough for two beds. This worked okay until Pat reached puberty and wanted her own room. The solution was that Pat got mom and dad's bedroom, mom moved to the couch and dad took Pat's bed in our bedroom. That was a bad situation. Every child nearing puberty needs to have their own bedroom, or at the very least their own bed. And parents should sleep together.

Also, for years, we did not have any type of air conditioning or central heating. For heat we had a coal stove in the utility room. For cooling dad installed a window sized fan in their bedroom window. It blew air out of

the house. This created a vacuum so that when you opened other windows, outside air would be drawn into the house. Needless to say, we slept with our bedroom windows open during hot summer nights. Being a curious little kid, I ask mom one day how the fan in their bedroom window was causing air to come into the windows in my bedroom. She said, "I don't know. I guess it just goes around the corner of the house and blows into your window." Mom could do math and read well enough, but she wasn't up on her science. She never attended high school. I might mention here that dad went to high school, but he had to get up very early every school day, do his morning chores, and then walk the 5 miles into town, to the Harrisburg High School. He then walked back after school and had evening chores to do. It didn't matter how hot or cold it was. Dad made that journey every school day. How many kids would do that today?

Now, back to our house and our lack of creature comforts. We had only cold running water, which came from our kitchen sink. If you wanted hot water, you heated it on the stove. We didn't have a bathroom. If you wanted to "use the bathroom", there was a small pot in the utility room, next to the coal stove. That's where you did number one and number two. If you wanted privacy, there was a blanket laying nearby. You picked it up and put it over your head. If someone had used the pot before you, and no one had emptied it, you learned to breathe through your mouth! If you needed a bath, you used the 4 foot diameter washtub that was also located beside the coal stove. Hot water for the bath came from a kettle on the stove. Mom did our laundry on an old fashion ringer type washing machine which was located out in the smokehouse... the one we had lived in before dad finished the main house. Phone service consisted of a "party line". Several households, (parties), shared a single phone line. This meant that anyone at any time could pick up their phone and listen in on whatever their neighbors might be saying. If you were sneaky about it, you could pick up the phone gingerly and listen in without anyone knowing you were listening. Of course, no one ever did that, right? There was no TV until I was about 5 or 6. Our first TV was a small screened black and white TV with only 3 available channels. It is completely amazing to me how far television technology has advanced in my lifetime.

Having shared with you our lack of household conveniences, I can truthfully say that we all thought we had it pretty good. What you've never had, you don't miss. Dad used to tell us stories about how bad off the natives were in Africa, where he served his war years. Many of them, he said, owned only what they could carry on their backs. As I will mention in greater detail later on, natives would gather around the soldier's mess hall, hoping for a morsel of food. Some of the adult natives would take food out of the hands of little kids who had retrieved it from

the garbage cans. The moral of the story? Appreciate what you have. You are better off than 90% of the world's people.

MY NON-MUSICAL FAMILY

I was born into a non-musical family. To the best of my recollection, I never heard any of my family members sing or play a musical instrument. The same was true of my aunts, uncles and cousins. I remember that we had a small radio in our house, but it was mainly used to get the news and possibly listen to the Baptist Hour if someone had died. I imagine I must have heard the occasional song on it, but the clearest early musical memory I have is of us kids sitting around the breakfast table eating buttered dinner rolls and hearing a jingle on the radio promoting Prince Albert smoking tobacco. It's funny, but I still remember the tune and the words to that jingle:

"Oh, the proof is in the puffin' and P.A. has the flavor. The flavor most favored in the U.S.A."

GRADE SCHOOL

There was, however, music at school. There were Christmas plays and music classes with piano accompaniment. In our one room school on Pierson Hill, we learned the traditional songs of Christmas, such as "Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer" and "White Christmas". To a 5 year old kid who had never seen anything like it before, our first grade Christmas play was a magical experience for me. In music class, we learned Negro spirituals like "Old Black Joe" and songs of the south such as "Sewanee River", "Oh, Suzanna" and "My Old Kentucky Home". I must have a good memory for songs, as I still remember most of them pretty well.

After second grade, Pierson school was closed and consolidated with Independence Grade School in Mitchellsville. I attended Independence from grades three through eight. Pierson School has been torn down but, as of this writing, the Independence school building still stands on the corner of Routes 34 and 145 in Mitchellsville. Independence school had music classes and Christmas plays as well. I was actually chosen to play the starring role of Santa Claus in our eighth grade Christmas play. I got the part mostly because I was a pudgy kid, but also because I could remember my lines. My voice was changing at that time and it went up way high once during the play. That got a good laugh from the audience. I also received the first award of my life in eighth grade. I was chosen as runner up for the American Legion Award.

I mentioned that I was a pudgy kid. This was due mostly to bad eating habits that started around fourth grade. I stayed pudgy until my sophomore year in high school. This brings up the subject of class bullying. There was a kid at my school who used to call me "fat boy". I have never forgotten who he was or what he said. We simply MUST teach our children not to make fun of, or bully other kids at school. My wife was also subjected to bullying at school, so it is far too common of an occurrence. Bullying and name-calling can leave a sensitive child with lifelong emotional scars.

POP MUSIC

My earliest recollection of pop music comes from visits to My Aunt Thelma and Uncle David 'Buck' Duke's house. They lived across the street from Uncle Joe... the one I mentioned earlier who died in the house fire. Aunt Thelma is the one who called mom the night of the fire. Aunt Thelma and Uncle Buck had two daughters that were a few years older than me. Their names were Sondra and Pearlie. I can remember them having a record player. They would play some of the early Elvis Presley hits. I remember hearing them play the Bobby Darin song "Splish Splash" as well. I liked those songs but they didn't have the effect on me that the music of the Beatles would have years later.

THE DOG TRILOGY

As a child, I had a pretty tender heart. I remember one day we were in the front yard and a mangy stray dog came down our road and tried to approach us. Butch had his BB gun and mom told him to shoot the dog. I yelled out, "NO!" and ran out in the road to get between Butch and the dog. I was going to protect him at the risk of being shot myself. Needless to say, the dog didn't get shot. But I wish we could have helped him. He just went on down the road, looking for someone else who might help him. Maybe I will see that dog again one day in heaven.

A couple of years later, my brother, my cousin and I were in Grandpa Martin's field when a stray dog came up to us. Was it the same one I rescued a couple of years before? I don't know. My cousin was three years older than me and he had a rifle with him. One of us (not me) said we ought to shoot that dog. Well, I didn't want it shot, but I didn't want to say anything either. I was afraid I would look like a "sissy" in front of my older cousin. So I didn't say anything and he killed the dog. I guess I had decided that looking "cool" in the eyes of others was more important than

standing up for what I thought was right. I was approaching the age of accountability.

Another incident involving the same cousin sealed the accountability deal. One summer day we asked dad if we could walk up the road with my cousin to investigate a creek. It was about a mile from our house and dad said he didn't want us to go that far. So we told him we wouldn't. Later that day, we went anyway. I found a crawdad shell at the creek and took it home. When I showed it to dad, he asked me where I got it. I lied to him and told him that I had found it in a ditch just up the road. I knew I had lied and I'm sure dad knew it too, but he didn't say anything. This was the first time I can recall that I was actually conscious of knowingly doing wrong. I had reached the age of accountability. If you've never heard of that term, it refers to a time that comes in all of our lives, when we consciously choose to do wrong. I believe that if a child dies before they reach the age of accountability, they are safe in God's arms. Once we cross that line, we are responsible for our actions.

To bring the dog story full circle, there was a time as a full grown adult when I shot a dog myself! Some dogs had been running our woods and spoiling the deer hunting for my son. I went out there with a gun, thinking to scare them off. But I ended up killing one of them. When I walked up to the dog, I immediately had a flash back to my childhood when I had put myself between a gun and a mangy dog. Then I remembered the time I remained silent while my cousin shot a dog. Now I had shot one myself. There is a phrase that I heard many years ago that says, "Oh what a wicked web we weave, when first we practice to deceive."

DÉJÀ VU

You probably have heard the term, déjà vu. I have experienced it once in my lifetime and it was life altering. It happened when I was about 12 years old. We were visiting with some of our family in Carrier Mills. In one of the rooms, there was an unused door leaning against a wall. My brother was messing around with the door and it fell and hit him on top of the head. One of the kids asked him who told him to mess with the door. He pointed to a couple of us kids and said, "He did, and he did." There is nothing particularly strange about that, but what WAS strange is that I had this overwhelming feeling that this exact same scenario had played out before my eyes at another time. It bothered me quite a bit. It's one of those experiences that you will never forget as long as you live.

THRIFTINESS

I have the reputation in my family of being a thrifty man. This was taught to me in my youth. Both my dad and his dad were thrifty men. There's a big difference between being thrifty and being a tightwad. I think my thriftiness comes from a couple of stories my dad planted in my heart as a child. He told me that when he was in Africa serving in World War 2, there were natives who would be gathered near the garbage cans behind the soldiers cafeteria. Whenever the soldiers would empty their food trays into the garbage, those natives would fight for it. Dad told me he saw little kids reach for a bite to eat and then a grown up would snatch it out of their hands. As a result, when dad returned home from the war, he never liked to see us leave food on our plates. He didn't like to see anything wasted.

On another occasion, dad told me that as an adult, he one day walked across our road to his dad's house. Dad said that grandpa Elmer was sitting at his kitchen table with his ear pressed against a radio. Dad asked grandpa why he didn't just turn the volume up. Grandpa said it was because he was "trying to save electricity!" Please keep in mind that both my dad and my grandpa lived through the Great Depression of the 1930's. They knew what it was like to do without.

Dad also told me of one humorous event that happened to him due to his frugalness. He went to buy his first ever new truck. He needed it for his carpentry job. He told the salesman that he didn't want any optional equipment. The salesman said, "But you do want a radio in it , right?" Dad said, no, that he did not want any optional equipment at all. The salesman shrugged his shoulders and said, okay. A few weeks later dad got a call that his new truck had arrived at the dealership and was ready for pickup. Dad went to get it and looked it all over. Then he said, "Where's the back bumper?" The salesman grinned and said, "The back bumper is optional!" Dad told him to order a back bumper.

At any rate, I have, by God's grace, made and spent well over a million dollars in my lifetime. If that is being too thrifty, then I suppose I am guilty.

OUR CHICAGO VACATION

Our one and only real vacation as kids was a trip to Chicago. We visited dad's brother, my Uncle Earl and his wife. They took us to the Museum of Science and Industry and to the Chicago Aquarium. I think it may have been the science museum that planted the love for science in my heart. There was a huge room there with booths on opposite ends. You could step into one booth and whisper, and the person in the other booth,

maybe 50 yards away, could hear you, and you could hear them. I called them the "whispering booths". It was all in the acoustics. Of course, I didn't know that at the time. I just thought that science must be like magic. Another exhibit featured two large, thick discs that had 3 inch holes drilled into their edges. They were mounted vertically and were set up so they would spin. They were synchronized so exactly that a 3 inch ball bearing would be flung from a hole in one disc and would fall exactly into a hole in the other disc, while both discs were rotating! Then the process would repeat in the other direction. There was also a captured World War 2 German submarine on display, and we got to go inside it. This all fascinated me.

As a child, I was a bed wetter, and when we first got to Chicago, my parents told Uncle Earl and Aunt Betty about it. I was so embarrassed that I cried. But my uncle was so nice about it. He told me not to worry about it and that he had just had an accident in his pants at work only recently. That made me feel better. Then he gave me a "gold" plated ruler to top it all off. I kept that ruler for decades! One more thing about that trip. They took us to the Cracker Jack factory where one of Uncle Earl's friends worked. His friend gave us an entire crate of Cracker Jacks! Man, we were on top of the world!

RHEUMATIC FEVER

I had Rheumatic fever when I was little. I remember having difficulty pedaling my bike one day, and Butch told mom about it. Mom took me to Doctor Johnson and he diagnosed me with Rheumatic fever. I had to take four shots over a period of a few weeks. I remember the Doctor telling mom that that she had brought me in just in time and we had, "Nipped it in the bud". I didn't know exactly what that meant, but it sounded good to me. Many years later I discovered that Rheumatic fever, if left untreated, can damage the heart. The Lord was looking out for me once again!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

We were not an outwardly religious family. My dad and mom were good parents, except that they never talked to us kids about God, and we never went to church on Sunday, or read from the Bible. Still, they did send us to Vacation Bible School every summer at Walnut Grove Baptist church. The church house was, (and still is), located about a mile to the southwest of my childhood home. I can still remember hearing the church bell ringing on Sunday mornings. That's how close we lived. I would like to say

that I strongly encourage you to teach your children about God and to take them to church. I also encourage you to support your church's Vacation Bible School program. I firmly believe many children meet God there. I know I did.

The first song that actually touched my soul was a church hymn at Vacation Bible School. I don't remember which song it was, but I do remember the day very well. I was eleven or twelve. It was the last day of Bible School, and the preacher gathered us kids all together in the sanctuary. He was talking about God and I was paying absolutely no attention to him whatsoever. But then he asked the piano player to play a song of invitation. I didn't even know what a song of invitation was at that time, and I wasn't paying any more attention to the song than I had been to the preacher. But God got my attention real fast. The best way I can describe it is that I felt fire course through my brain. It was an uncomfortable feeling. From that day to this, I've never had to question the existence of God. This happened in a Baptist church that taught from the Holy Bible. They taught that Jesus Christ is the Lord, the Savior, and the Son of God. So I knew that this was the God of the Bible who was working on me.

At first I didn't know what was going on, but then I saw a lot of the other kids leaving their pews and going up to the altar. So I figured that's what I was supposed to do too. I went to the alter and the preacher was telling us all to ask Jesus to come into our hearts. So I did that. We had learned about Jesus in Bible School of course, but I had never really taken it to heart. The preacher asked me if I had prayed to accept Jesus. I told him that I had. I didn't really feel any different, but God became very real to me that day. He has been faithful through the years, even though I have surely strayed from Him. It is significant that my first experience with God involved music.

**

I have to insert here that I've always wondered how anyone can be an atheist. Have they not yet had an experience with God? Or did they have one and just explain it away? The Bible says that the grace of God appears to everyone. Both the Bible and creation itself speak of a Creator. For example, how did the first baby appear without two adults being involved? And where did those two adults come from, unless they were first babies? The Bible answers this question.

***

After the service, one of the VBS workers, Mrs. Sheffield, (God bless her), told us that we needed to follow through with baptism. Walnut Grove didn't have a baptistery at that time, so I was baptized shortly after VBS at a small Baptist church located at 1801 Grape Street in Dorris Heights,

on the northern outskirts of Harrisburg. That was the first time I can remember seeing my parents in church, other than for a funeral. Once again, I didn't feel any different. On the way home though, dad said, "I don't know what it was, but something sure got hold of me in that baptism service." I know now that it was the Holy Spirit. The same Holy Spirit that had gotten hold of me at Walnut Grove Baptist church. That night dad took me to the evening service at Walnut Grove church. They asked me to say something. I said, "Before, I didn't know what to do, but now I do." Sad to say, we didn't go back to church again after that day.

Not many days later mom got a phone call. It was the preacher. The same one that was there the day I went to the altar. He told mom he had a dream about me and my sister Pat the night before he gave the alter call at VBS. He said he didn't know who we were during the dream but that he recognized us from that dream the day of the alter call. So that is another confirmation that God was at work in our lives. Still, we didn't go back to church.

Louise McClusky and her family lived about a mile north of us on the same road we lived on. She was also one of the VBS workers. She called mom one day to ask if she could pick us kids up the next Sunday and take us to church. Mom said okay. Sure enough, the next Sunday her family stopped by to pick us up for church. But we told them that we were sick. I really don't remember if we were actually sick, or if it was the devil at work, but we didn't go. Satan was wanting to keep us out of church, that's for sure. And he was succeeding.

I got a crystal radio set not too long after that. I could tune it to the Harrisburg radio station and listen with an earphone. I was listening one Sunday and a preacher was talking about salvation. I got the same feeling that I got the day of the alter call, so I knew God was still wanting a commitment from me.

Soon I started feeling like I should read the Bible. I figured, like any book, you start at the beginning. So I started reading in Genesis. Reading the Bible brought me under conviction. When I got to the part about killing and sacrificing bulls and heifers, I thought, "This is crazy! I don't have any bulls or heifers to sacrifice!" That's how Bible illiterate I was. The result was that I quit reading the Bible without truly having a full understanding of Jesus as my Savior. I would strongly suggest that seekers start reading the Bible in the New Testament, not the Old. Start with the Gospel of John, then continue through to the end. Then go back and read the other three gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke. After that, you will better understand the Old Testament when you read it.

**

While we are discussing reading the Bible, let me suggest something to you. Suppose you wrote a very special letter to a loved one who was overseas, but you never heard back from them. Months later, you call them. Soon the conversation turns to your letter. You say, "Did you get that letter I sent you? I never heard back from you!" They respond, "Yes, I got the letter, but I just never got around to reading it." How would you feel? Probably, very hurt! I imagine God must feel the same way when we don't bother reading the Bible, His letter to us. Have you read your letter from God?

There are many false teachings in the world. We need to learn what the Bible has to say about them. If it's not in the Bible, or does not line up with what the Bible teaches, run from it! Remember these Bible scriptures:

1. The Apostle Paul wrote: Let God's curse fall on anyone, including us or even an angel from heaven, who preaches a different kind of Gospel than the one we preached to you. I say again what we have said before: If anyone preaches any other Good News than the one you welcomed, let that person be cursed. Galatians 1: 8-9 (NLT).

2. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. 2 Timothy 3:16 (NLT)

Envision a vast field expanding off in all directions, as far as the eye can see. There is a narrow road in front of you. Up ahead on that narrow road is someone standing with a lamp. It is Jesus. Jesus tells us that He is the light of the world (John 18:12). Branching off this narrow road are many wide and well paved side roads. At each of these exits someone stands, beckoning to you with an inviting smile. They represent many things. Fame, riches, beauty, the easy life, love of self. Anything that we make more important than following God. This is satan and he is coaxing us to follow him. But back on the narrow road, the light is beckoning you. It is showing you the right way to go. It is Jesus. He looks back often to see if you are following, if you have slowed down, if you have wandered off onto one of the many side roads. Which path will you take?

The Bible teaches us that the road to eternal life is narrow and that few people choose to take it. The Bible also teaches that many other roads lead to hell, and that many people choose to take one of them. God wants you to take the narrow road. He is lighting the way for you. It is the road to Heaven. All the other roads lead to Hell. Avoid them at all cost.

***

THE PLAYBOY PROBLEM

Sometime after I quit reading the Bible, a friend invited me over to his house for a visit. He showed me a Playboy magazine, and that began what I will call my Playboy problem. When I was 16 or 17, another "friend" took me and another guy to an adult film in Evansville. That just made matters worse. I'm not trying to lay the blame at someone else's feet here. We all have a free will and we are responsible for our own bad choices. And we will suffer the consequences, sooner or later. If a person robs a bank, God will forgive them if they repent and turn to Him. But they still are going to have spend some time in jail.

My Playboy problem plagued me off and on for much of my life. I would get away from it and then get drawn back in. I know that evil spirits were involved. It caused untold grief for me and my family. For that, I am deeply sorry. In the end, much later in life, the Lord struck me with such a severe conviction over this that I finally was delivered from it and have never returned to it. What I tried to do for myself but couldn't, the Lord did for me. As the Bible teaches, those whom the Lord loves, he chastises. Thank you, Jesus!

This would be a good place to mention cell phones and the internet. Our children are faced with far greater temptations today than when I was young. Please be aware of this and take whatever measures you deem necessary to protect your children. There are filters and apps designed specifically to filter out adult and other offensive content. Be sure to take full advantage of them, for the sake of your children. Before your children reach puberty, they need their own beds to sleep in.

FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE

We used to have a basketball goal by the driveway at our house. I can remember shooting baskets out there and saying to myself, "If I make 9 out of the next 10 baskets, that means I'm a Christian." I would do my best and sometimes I'd make it. If I didn't, I'd keep trying till I did. In the Bible, at the book of First Corinthians, chapter 13, the apostle Paul speaks about faith, hope and love. He says the greatest of these three is love. The Bible also says that without faith, it is impossible to please God. My basket shooting was hope. I was in need of faith, and more love.
There was another incident that happened to me around this same time period that helped my faith. I clearly remember that one day I was in the woods, up in a tree house that my cousin had built. It was just me there that day. I was 30 or 40 feet in the air. For some reason, I climbed out on a limb. I started losing my balance and was going to fall when something pushed me back up. The Lord had assigned an angel to watch over me.

He had work for me to do. He has assigned an angel to watch over you too. He has work for you to do too.

FAMILY MATTERS

Like all married couples, my mom and dad would have the occasional fight. The main thing I remember about this was that dad would normally stay calm while mom sometimes didn't. I found myself wondering why dad didn't fight back. I guess I saw it as a sign of weakness back then, but today, as an adult, I realize that he was being the better person. He was showing his kids how grownups should conduct themselves.

There was one particular incident that stands out clearly in my mind. Mom was going to town and told dad that she wanted some curtains hung in a particular way while she was gone. Dad didn't remember exactly what she had said, so he asked Pat if she remembered. She told him what she remembered, but dad did it differently. When mom got back, it was not done the way she had told him, and she threw a fit. He had to take them down and redo them. I remember thinking that dad shouldn't have to put up with that kind of behavior from mom. Mom would sometimes call us kids heathens. I didn't know what that meant, so one day I looked it up in the dictionary. The next time mom called me a heathen, I asked her if she knew what that meant. She said she did. She never called any of us kids heathens again after that. But these kinds of incidents were few and far between. We mostly had a good family life. And to mom's defense, she became a much better person later on in life. Dad had his faults too, like we all do, but he didn't put them on display in front of us kids.

I'd like to emphasize that mom always took good care of us kids. Even when she started working at the cap factory, she would get up early and make sure there was food ready for us to heat up when we got home from school. She worked to earn extra money so we could have things that other families didn't have. I remember that we were one of the first families in our neighborhood to have a television. We also had good clothes to wear and they were always clean. We were very blessed to have parents that loved us and provided well for us.

THE 60'S

On November 22, 1963, president John F. Kennedy was shot in a motorcade in Dallas, Texas. I was at school when we heard the news. We only knew that the president had been shot but did not know how serious it was. Our principal, Mr. Wallace, called an assembly and led us all in a

prayer for our nation and for the president. As we all know now, John Kennedy did not survive. That was a heartbreaking time for all of America. With the assassination of President Kennedy, our country seemed to lose its innocence. Also, we were on the verge of war in Vietnam. We needed some good news.

For me and millions of other teenagers, that news came in January of 1964. It was the Beatles. I had just turned 13. If you weren't a part of that era, it's hard to explain the impact the Beatles had on culture, not just in America, but worldwide. By this time I had my own transistor radio. I can remember at one point tuning across the dial from one end to the other and hearing Beatles songs playing on almost every station. They held the top 5 songs in America. That was a feat which had never been achieved before. And to top it off, they wrote their own songs. This was when I really got interested in music. Someone once said, If you remember the 60's, you probably weren't a part of them. It wasn't like that for me. Some of my friends got involved with marijuana or other drugs. Of course, alcohol was also available, but I never got hooked on any of that. Thank the Lord, I got into music instead.

When I had saved enough money, I bought a cheap guitar and amp from Heart's Music store on Poplar Street in Harrisburg. I also bought a book on how to form chords. I practiced until I could play a few chords. Actually, you can play hundreds of songs with a simple progression of just three major chords. I tried to write some songs, but found that I couldn't. I lost some of my enthusiasm for playing, but not my enthusiasm for music.

With the Beatles, came a full on music explosion. The "British Invasion" brought the music of the 60's to life. British groups such as the Rolling Stones, and so many others "invaded" the United States. More American pop music was now being written as well, and it was taking hold. It was mainly geared toward the youth. The music of the 60's was now in full swing. I still think it was one of the most creative era's in music history.

The summer between my graduation from grade school and my Freshman year at Harrisburg High School was filled with music for me. I developed a daily routine of taking a blanket and an old couch cushion out to the south side of our house. I would lay there under our big Catalpa tree and listen all day to music on my transistor radio. The weather was wonderful and life was sweet. At lunch, mom would even bring me something to eat. That was a magic summer. It seemed like at least one great new hit song was being released every week. Still, I wasn't writing any songs.

A BEATLE IN BENTON

As an interesting note, George Harrison, the lead guitarist for the Beatles, came to visit his sister Louise Harrison Caldwell in nearby Benton that September. He and his brother Peter spent three weeks in our area, including attending a parade on the Harrisburg town square. George also sat in with a band at the VFW, (Veterans of Foreign Wars), in Eldorado. This marked the first time any member of the Beatles performed in the United States!

As early as March 1963, Louise had taken copies of Beatles songs, sent to her from Liverpool England by George, to nearby radio stations and requested that they be played. WFRX in West Frankfort was one of them. They were happy to oblige, even though most Americans had not heard of the Beatles yet . These were possibly the earliest Beatles songs ever played over the airwaves in the United States. Just a few short months later, the Beatles would become world famous!

**

In 1994, a documentary titled, "A Beatle In Benton", was released on DVD and in book form. I still have a rare copy of the DVD. I regrettably resold the book. The DVD includes interviews with locals who spent time with George during his Illinois visit. Kenny Welsh and Gabe McCarty from the band George sat in with at the VFW are interviewed. Their group was called The Vests. Marcia Runback, who was a high school Junior at the time, had a DJ position at WFRX in the summer of 1963. She interviewed George on her radio program, also a first. The 102 minute long DVD is worth the watch for any avid Beatles fan.

***

I notice that I have gotten a little long winded here, as I tend to do when discussing the Beatles, so I will move on. Oh, one more thing. I have nearly all the early 45 rpm records that were released by the Vee-Jay record label after Capitol Records turned the Beatles down in early 1963. They have been played to death and are not in great condition, but they will make great collector's items. I also have all of the U.S. releases of Beatles albums on vinyl records. Some of them are in very good condition. One or Two of them are still in their cellophane wrappings. These could be worth hanging on to.

HIGH SCHOOL

I attended Harrisburg High School from 1964 through 1968. Somewhere during that period I discovered that there must be some kind of composing ability hiding inside of me. Dad was doing work under our house and asked me to help him. As usual, I had my radio going, tuned to KXOK out of St. Louis. I put the radio just outside the crawlspace entrance

and crawled under the house with dad. I was far enough under the house that I could barely hear the music playing. I thought I was hearing the melody, but when I moved back closer to the crawlspace entrance, I realized that the melody I was hearing in my head was not the melody that was playing on the radio. I had invented it. Maybe now I could write songs? Not yet! I think God was preventing me because, had I been able to write back then, I would undoubtedly have written secular music. Little did I know, God had other things in store.

MY FIRST JOB

I mentioned earlier that I saved up enough money to buy a guitar. That money came from my first regular job, other than mowing lawns. When I was 15, mom got a job working for my uncle David Lee (Buck) Duke. He owned a car wash at 113 East Sloan Street in Harrisburg. In those days, the cars were washed and dried by hand. Mom's job was to dry one fourth of each car that came through the line after it had been washed. I must have asked her if I could work there too. She got me hired on and we worked side by side on Saturdays. We made 50 cents an hour! If we washed a hundred cars before closing time we all got an extra one dollar bonus. We all worked our butts off to get that extra dollar!

One day I asked Uncle Buck if I could pull cars up from the wash area into the drying area. Keep in mind, I was only fifteen. But he let me do it! About the second or third car, my foot got caught on the accelerator and I came within a few inches of driving that car through a garage door. Needless to say, that was the end of me pulling up cars!

MY FIRST TAPE RECORDER

Around this time I also became fascinated with recording. For my birthday, I asked for, and got, a *tiny* portable reel-to-reel tape recorder. It didn't take long for me to put it to use. I loved manned space flight, which was new and exciting in those days. When Russia launched the first ever manmade object into orbit around the Earth, that fascinated me. They called it Sputnik, which means, fellow traveler. Dad called us all outside one evening and we watched it going overhead. Sputnik showed the United States that Russia was ahead of us in what became known as the space race. The race was now on to see who would launch the first man into orbit. Russia beat us at that too, launching a man into orbit in 1961. But we weren't behind very long. Alan Sheppard made our first suborbital flight later that same year, and John Glenn made our first orbital flight in 1962. My parents would let me skip school on the days that a manned

space flight was scheduled. I would watch the launches in fascination and record the audio from the TV onto my little reel to reel recorder.

At one point, I decided to try singing into the recorder. After all, if I was going to write songs, I would need to record them for posterity! Oh my, did I sound terrible! I was completely out of tune. I remember the song was "Going Back To Houston"', by Dean Martin, so that must have been in 1965. After that, I figured there would be no singing in my future. Turns out that wasn't entirely the case.

MY TWO FRONT TEETH

At about the age of 14, I developed a severe tooth ache in my two front teeth. Mom took me to the dentist and she was told that the teeth were abscessed. The dentist said he couldn't save them, but that there was a dentist in Evansville who could. Mom talked to dad and, for some unknown reason, he said they weren't going to take me to Evansville. So the dentist in Harrisburg had to pull my two front teeth and put in a partial plate. At 14, this was devastating to me. When I tried to eat, my mouth felt like it was already too full to fit in any food. The partial plate would also drop down at unexpected times. I remember as I was talking to a girl one day, the plate dropped. She looked at me as though I was some kind of Frankenstein monster! Needleless to say, we never dated. I got pretty shy after that.

YOU'RE FIRED!

During high school, I also had a job stocking shelves and bagging groceries at Big Star Supermarket, located at 2 West Locust street in Harrisburg. My fellow workers and I had a standing joke we would sometimes play on one another. If one of us was in the employees bathroom, someone might lob a can of beans at the door, just to scare the daylights out of them. On day I did that and the boss was in there. He threw open the bathroom door and was not amused. In fact, he fired me! That was the first and only time I've ever been fired from a job.

HELP!

In August of 1965 the Beatles second motion picture came out. It was titled, "HELP!" and was showing at the Starlight drive-in theater, near Eldorado. I wanted to see it so bad, but I was only 14 and couldn't drive. I worked up the nerve to ask mom if she would take me. I knew dad would

never do it. He used to call the Beatles the Beagles, just to get my goat! He didn't like them. But mom, bless her heart, agreed to take me. That's something a child doesn't forget. A few months after the "HELP!" album came out, the Beatles released another album called Rubber Soul. I asked for it as a Christmas present and, sure enough, this album shaped gift with my name on it appeared under our Christmas tree. One day soon after, I found myself home alone. It was just too tempting! I eased open the gift, played the album, and then put it back under the tree. I must have done a good job of wrapping it back up because nothing was ever said about it, and I never told anyone. Sorry mom and dad! I never did that again. But the music was awesome!

MELLOW YELLOW

When I was about 17, we hit dad up to buy a new car. He came through with a beautiful, light yellow 1967 Chevy Impala Super Sport! My friends at school called it "Mellow Yellow", in reference to a song by Donovan that was popular at the time. That car turned some heads! We'd had it for less than a month when I was up on the Harrisburg square, with a car load of girls following behind me. My eyes were on them, and I didn't see the car coming through the stop light on Main Street. I made my left turn, and plowed right into another girl. There was major damage to both cars and dad and mom got stuck with the repair bill. Years later, dad told me he had to refinance the car because the insurance rate went up so much after my accident. He and mom never discussed finances with us when we were kids.

That car got me into another bit of trouble later on. My girlfriend and I had gotten it stuck up one night on a muddy road that we didn't have any business being on. In those days there were no cell phones, so all we knew to do was knock on someone's door and ask for help. It was after dark. At the first house, a man opened the door and stuck a gun in our faces. He had the gun pointed right at us and he meant business. He told us to go! We tucked our tails and ran! Fortunately, at another house down the road, a wonderful old couple took us in and allowed us call for help. I'll never forget their kindness. I hope to see them in heaven one day and thank them.

MOTORCYCLES

Starting at around the age of 16, and continuing until 2022, I owned several different motorcycles. In 1967, a friend of mine came up with the idea to ride our bikes to Gatlinburg, Tennessee. Amazingly, our parents let

us do it! We both nearly killed ourselves on that trip. I lost control in some lose gravel on a highway and barley missed skidding into an embankment at high speed. We met a fellow bike rider in Gatlinburg and he took us up one of the Smoky Mountain peaks. On the way back down, the road was very damp because we were high enough to be in the clouds. There was a hairpin turn ahead and I was in the lead. I slowed enough to negotiate the curve, then looked back at my two friends in my rearview mirror. Just as though it had been choreographed, the two of them slid sideways in perfect unison and disappeared into a ravine! I expected to find them dead but, miraculously, they both came out relatively unharmed. Their bikes didn't fare as well, but they were still rideable, so we retrieved them and continued on down the mountain to relative safety.

When it came time to head back, home we decided to stop off at Mammoth Caves in Kentucky. It was dark before we made it there, so we stopped and pitched our tents at a park. We must have been more tired than we realized, because we both fell asleep immediately and were dead to the world for the next 10 hours. When we woke up it was blazing hot, but we forged on. When we got within 100 yards of the mouth of the cave, something amazing happened. It was as though an air conditioner had suddenly been switched on outside! We soon discovered that it was cool air coming from the mouth of this huge cave. Thus, the name Mammoth caves! When we got deep down inside the cavern, our guide took us to an area that had seating and lighting. He had us sit down. "Now", he said, "Please remain seated, as I am going to show you what the natural lighting is like down here. He reached over and switched off the lights. There was a collective gasp. You absolutely could not see your hand in front of your face. It was the deepest darkness I had ever experienced. You would be helpless to find your way out of there in those conditions. We were all relieved when the guide turned the lights back on! Little did I know that I would later spend nearly 23 years working underground with just this kind of lighting conditions.

Another thing that I would like to relate from this period of my life involves one of my best friends. His name was James Healy. He had gotten a motorcycle shortly after I got my first one and we rode together quite a bit, so we had a pretty closed bond. One day, as I was helping dad build an addition onto our house, my cousin Rita walked up. She told us she had just heard that James had been killed in a motorcycle accident. I hoped it wasn't true, but it was. James was taking a friend home when he made a left turn off the highway. The car behind him didn't expect the turn, and he decided to pass James. James turned right in front of him.

At the funeral, a fellow who had come upon the accident, shortly after it happened, saw that I was grieving and came over to comfort me. He said that James was still alive when he got to him. He said that James looked at

him and said, "If I could just move my legs." But he died before they could get him to the hospital. The friend that James was taking home when the accident occurred was badly injured, but he escaped with his life. Following this experience, he became a preacher.

PNEUMONIA

One day I was at home alone and decided to do some much needed painting on the outside of the house. I was probably 17. I sat up my ladder and commenced to paint. I hadn't planted the ladder firmly, and it slipped out from under me. I hit the ground hard. Within 5 minutes I started shivering uncontrollably and felt like I was freezing. I went inside and wrapped myself up in a blanket. It was a hot day so, when the shivers didn't stop, I went outside and laid on the ground in the sun with the blanked still wrapped around me. I laid there till the shivering finally let up. It turned out that I had developed chemical pneumonia. Breathing in the mineral spirits from the paint, together with the sudden hard fall had triggered it to manifest almost instantly.

EARTHQUAKE!

November 9th, 1968, was a crisp fall day in Southern Illinois. At 11am that Saturday morning, I was cleaning a second floor bathroom at the Cap Factory on the corner of Main and Church streets in Harrisburg. When I exited the bathroom, the factory was deserted. It had been a beehive of activity when I entered the bathroom, but now it was totally silent and empty, except for me. I didn't know what to think! Had I missed the rapture? I ran down the stairs. Employees were milling around outside. Most of them looked scared and confused. I asked someone what was going on. "Didn't you feel that?" someone asked. "We just had an earthquake, and we thought the building was coming down!"
The 5.3 magnitude earthquake turned out to be one of the most widely felt quakes in U.S. history. It was felt in 23 states and caused structural damage as far North as Chicago. Incredibly, I had been moving around so much while cleaning the bathroom that I hadn't perceived the shaking, even though considerable damage had been done to our building. Thankfully, there were no deaths.

Southern Illinois is located within the New Madrid geological fault zone. In 1811 and 1812, the fault produced what became the largest U.S. earthquakes ever recorded East of the Rocky Mountains. One of these completely destroyed the town of New Madrid, Missouri. It created temporary waterfalls in the Mississippi River and caused the river to flow

backward for a time. It actually created Reelfoot Lake, in Tennessee. Many eyewitness accounts of these events have been preserved, including a detailed written record left by John Bradbury of the Linnean Society. If you are interested, it is well worth the read. According to experts, a future earthquake in our area is extremely likely. In 2005, geologists estimated a 90% likelihood of a 6-7 magnitude quake occurring in Southern Illinois before 2055. Make sure you have earthquake insurance on your home!

Anyone who was old enough to remember the earthquake we experienced in 1968 is guaranteed to have their own story to tell. In the late 1970's I asked an old timer at the coal mines to tell me his story. Here is a paraphrased version:

I was in the mines when that earthquake hit. The boss had sent me into the old works to do some timbering, so I was working alone that day. When you aren't working around equipment, there is dead silence underground. It gets so quiet that you can even hear your watch ticking, if you stop and listen. I had just sat down for a short break when I heard something that sounded like thunder off in the distance. When you're 300 feet underground though, you don't hear thunder. So I was confused. The thunder sound didn't stop. It just kept getting louder and closer. Then everything started to shake. That's when I figured this must be an earthquake. There's nowhere to run when you're underground. I was sitting under a timber I had just set, so I figured this was as safe a spot as I was going to get. The shaking got worse, and the sound got louder. It sounded like a train was heading toward me at full speed. I said my prayers and closed my eyes. It sounded like the train passed right underneath me, then headed off in the direction opposite of where it came from. The shaking and the sound started fading and so I figured I was going to be okay. That was scary though, I can tell you that!

MAN ON THE MOON

In July of 1969 America put two men on the surface of the moon, and I was privileged to experience the entire event live on TV. The first steps on the moon by Neil Armstrong were telecast live all around the world. This was the first human being to ever set foot on another celestial body. For one brief moment in time, all humanity came together to marvel and celebrate this great achievement. It was pretty fantastic, and I was quite proud to call myself an American. I only wish I could be as proud of America today as I was on that day. But that could be the subject of an entire additional book. Maybe I will write it one day.

There are, of course, many other stories I could relate to you from my High School years but, for the sake of brevity, I will move ahead to my college years.

THE COLLEGE YEARS

The year after I graduated from high school in 1968, I enrolled at Southeastern Illinois College. At SIC, I earned an Associate of Arts degree. SIC was still located in the Harrisburg High School complex that first year. They moved to their current location, south of Eldorado shortly thereafter.

I recall hearing one day at school that Richard Nixon was giving a campaign speech at the regional airport in Herrin. He was campaigning to be president of the United States. I took a friend with me and we attended his speech. Later that year he was elected as our 37th president. He would also be elected to serve a second term, on the promise that he would end the Vietnam war. But he would be found complicit in the Watergate scandal in 1972 and was facing almost certain impeachment. He resigned the presidency in August, 1974.

**

I was also privileged to see President Gerald Ford, (Nixon's successor), in a parade in downtown Evansville on April 23, 1976. As the presidential motorcade passed by, I raised my camera and snapped a photograph. When I had the film developed there was a secret service man in the picture, standing near the president. He was staring directly at my camera. He was making sure it wasn't a gun. I still have that picture somewhere.

In August of 2018, Mandi, Wade and I had the opportunity to attend a Donald J. Trump rally in Evansville. The crowd was so large and the waiting line was so long that we despaired of ever getting inside the auditorium. I would say the line was at least a mile long, snaking back and forth up and down city streets. I must confess that we only got inside because we bucked the line. The auditorium was packed to overflowing. Mr. Trump gave an inspiring speech.

As a side note, in October of 1960, then presidential candidate John F. Kennedy visited Southern Illinois as a part of his presidential campaign. He gave a speech on the steps of the Harrisburg Court House on October 3rd. I was 9 years old. Even at that age, I wanted to go see this great man. But it was a work day, and dad had to work.

***

After graduating from SIC, my choice was to either get drafted, (and most likely be drafted into the Vietnam War), or continue on with college at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. College students could get a draft deferral in those days. It wasn't a hard decision to make. Dad had hurt his back at work and wasn't able to work at the time, so I applied for a grant. College was going to be expensive. I got the grant.

After working that summer in the laboratory at Dairy Brand Creamery in Harrisburg, I was off to Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. I roomed over there with a friend, Brad Pavelonis, who was also from Harrisburg. Even though I had worked during the summer months between school years, I still couldn't afford a car. My roommate did have a car and he graciously would haul me to Carbondale and then back home on the weekends. One weekend he decided to stay in Carbondale, so I stuck my thumb out and hitchhiked home. When mom found out, I guess she had a talk with dad, because he took me to Eldorado that weekend and bought an old Chevy for me to use. By this time, his back had healed and he was back to working as a carpenter. Even though my parents didn't take us to church, they were otherwise good parents. We knew they loved us, and they sacrificed a lot for us.

**

Now that I had wheels, I was able to come home every weekend. On one of those weekends I was invited by a friend to attend a party at the home of one of her other friends. It was at a little trailer located just south of Tailor Field, at the West end of Mable street. That's where I meet my future wife. I don't think I said a word to her that night, but I sure noticed her. What struck me was her shyness. I didn't hear her say a word to anyone that night. She was just sitting off in a corner, looking shy. Oh yes, and she also had pretty legs. All the girls wore mini-skirts in those days.

A few days later I couldn't get this shy girl off my mind. I must have been very callous, because I call Martha, the one who had invited me to the party, and described the girl I was interested in. I wanted to know this girl's name. Martha told me her name was Birdie Bayne and that she lived on the corner of West Mable and South Feazel streets, just a block from where the party had been. So I called up Birdie and asked her for a date. Thankfully, she said yes.

Let me say here that this was not just a chance meeting. This was arranged by God. Birdie told me years later that she had been praying for the Lord to send her a nice guy. I guess he couldn't find one, so he sent me instead. But seriously, I had also prayed, (for years), that God would send me the right mate. So we had both been praying, and God honored our prayers. We both firmly believe that God put us together. If you are reading this as a young unmarried person, keep marriage on your prayer

list. Marriage will be one of the most important decisions in your life. You will most likely spend more of your life with your spouse than with any other person. Who your spouse is will determine who your children are. Will marrying the mate God picks for you guarantee a perfect marriage? No, there is no such thing. There will be ups and downs, but if you make the choice to stay together, God will see you through. Birdie and I are looking forward to celebrating our 50th wedding anniversary on April 12, 2024!

I've often wondered what would have happened if I had taken that job in Chicago. For one thing, you, as my descendent, would not have been born. So take your choice of spouses very seriously. In fact, place it in God's hands. Ask him to send the person you should marry.

***

At Carbondale, the music was still great, but in 1970 the Beatles broke up. That was quite a shock, but life goes on. The Carpenters, John Denver and many others artists were big now. And there was always the hope that each Beatle would go on to create great music on their own. It turns out they did, but separately they had nowhere near the impact on music that the Beatles had as a band.

One day, while I was living in Carbondale, I saw a professional looking Sony reel to reel tape recorder in one of the stores. I couldn't afford it, but I had to have it. I struck up a deal with the store salesman. I would make a down payment and then make monthly payments until I paid it off. Of course I couldn't take it home until I made the last payment. That took a long time! When I finally did get it, I learned how to record songs from vinyl albums and splice them together so that I could play them back in the order I wanted to hear them. By the way, I have collected a LOT of vinyl record albums and CD's over the years. Just to show you how fast technology progresses, I owned copies of the Beatles last album, Abby Road, in five different formats. There was the vinyl record album, 8-track tape, cassette, Reel to reel and Compact disc. Today, we also have access to Abby Road and virtually any other album or song for that matter, on the internet.

Now, as it turned out, some of the classes I took at SIC would not transfer to SIU, so it took me an extra semester to graduate. I graduated from SIU with a Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Technology in 1973. Mom, dad and Birdie attended my graduation. One of my cousins told me how proud the family was that I was the first one of our entire ancestry to graduate college.

GETTING MY WINGS

After graduating from Southern Illinois University, I sent out several job applications. I got responses from a few of them, and so I set up job interviews. Three of them were in Chicago. The train ride from Carbondale to Chicago was a little scary for this Southern Illinois boy who hadn't really been far from home and on his own that much until now. I was "getting my wings".

After arriving at Chicago's Union Station, I caught cabs to my interviews. I had the interviews set up so that I could do them all in just a couple of days. The interviews went well, and they all seemed interested in me. I headed back home, not particularly impressed with Chicago. Back home it wasn't long before a letter came in the mail. One of the companies was offering me a job. I thought it over and decided that I didn't want to live in Chicago after all. It was too big and too far from home. Besides, Birdie wasn't in Chicago.

LIVING IN EVANSVILLE

By this time I was 21 years old, and I felt that it was time to move out on my own. There was a company in Evansville, Indiana that had contacted me through one of my job applications. My job interview at Sunbeam Plastics went well, and they offered me a job in the Engineering Department. Sunbeam was in the closure business. They injection molded closures, or caps, as some people call them, for bottles and cans. Child proof closures had just been mandated by the Federal Government, and I was in on the ground floor. We were producing probably 80% to 90% of all the child proof safety caps in The United Stated. In those days, virtually every anti-freeze jug in America had a child proof cap that was produced by Sunbeam Plastics. As of this writing, many of them still do.

LOVE AND MARRIAGE

During this time, I was renting an apartment on Brentwood Circle at Fielding Courts on the eastern outskirts of Evansville. The job at Sunbeam was challenging and exciting but I didn't like the single life. I was missing Birdie. She hardly ever got to come over and see me. I would go back to Harrisburg most weekends to see her. Finally, I got up the nerve to ask her to marry me. She said yes!

We were married by Reverend Orville W. Ammon on Friday, April 12, 1974. The ceremony was conducted at the church he pastured on the corner of North Jackson and West Locust streets in Harrisburg. This was only about 450 feet from the hospital where I was born. That church is no longer standing. We chose Reverend Ammon because he was an

acquaintance of Birdie's mom, Dora. She had attended church there. Dora was a Christian but her husband John, at that point, was not.

Concerning our wedding ceremony, I learned something years later that I wasn't aware of at the time. Being the shy girl she was, Birdie had to be pushed down the aisle on our wedding night. She was refusing to go down the aisle. Her Aunt Vern saved the day by giving her a shove and saying, "You get out there!" Somewhere, there is a reel to reel tape of the ceremony. Yes, I used my Sony reel to reel tape recorder to tape the ceremony!

I had prepared an 8-track music tape with some of our favorite songs to listen to while driving to French Lick, Indiana, where we honeymooned. Two of the songs on the tape were "We've Only Just Begun" by The Carpenters and "If" by Bread. Both of these are timeless classics, I think, and worthy of a listen. The French Lick was a fancy hotel, and we had reserved the honeymoon suite. We were told that President Richard Nixon had recently stayed in the room directly above ours. This was the first time either of us had been served breakfast in bed, and it seemed pretty awkward. The meals there were great though, and so were the desserts. Unfortunately, it was cold that week. We were able to take a surrey ride though. On the way back to Evansville we took a route that allowed us to visit Abraham Lincoln's boyhood home. His mother and some other family members are buried there. We enjoyed a very nice tour before heading back to Evansville.

**

I recently learned that one of my great-great-grandfathers, David Parker, lived near Abraham Lincoln's boyhood home in Indiana. Lincoln was born in 1809, and my great-great grandpa Parker was born in 1818, so it is plausible that they could have know each other. The lineage is as follows. My mom was Tessie Ward. Tessie's mom was Pearl Langford. Pearl's mom was Melissa Parker. Melissa's dad was David Parker. The Parker family had moved to Indiana from Ohio.

We recently located and visited Grandpa Parkers grave. It is located in Friendship Cemetery in Indiana, less than 14 miles from Lincoln's boyhood home. Richland City is about 28 miles east of Evansville, Indiana by car. To find the cemetery, go to Richland City Indiana and travel east on Adams Street, (also known as W County Road 400N). In two miles, the road will curve right (south) onto County Road 400W/350N. In half a mile, the cemetery will be on the right. The coordinates are 37°56'12"N 87°07'57"W. Grandpa Parker's grave is toward the back of the cemetery, on the right. It's a tall, slender monument with well worn engraving. If you visit his gravesite, you might want to take a brush with you to remove some mold. Also, some white paper and a crayon or pencil will help you

decipher the engravings. The name, birth and death dates are legible, but there is a long inscription near the bottom that I could not read.

***

When Birdie and I got back to Evansville, we settled into our nice little apartment at Fielding Courts. I was the bread winner and Birdie was an excellent house keeper and an even better cook. I could always look forward to coming home to a warm smile and a hot meal.

WORKING AT SUNBEAM

At Sunbeam Plastics, we injection molded bottle and can closures for many different companies. Glade air freshener was one of our big customers. Our biggest seller at that time was the invention of my boss, Randall K. Julian. It was called the Squeeze Lock cap. They were used on gallon jugs of antifreeze to keep children from getting into the poisonous antifreeze and drinking it. The Squeeze lock cap had tabs 180 degrees apart that protruded beneath the bottom skirt of the cap. You squeezed opposite of those two sides and the tabs would move outward, allowing them to pass by detents in the bottle. Then you could turn the cap and open the bottle. I was given the assignment of testing the caps to make sure they passed government protocol. If too many kids could open the bottle, you had to go back to the drawing board. You wouldn't believe the ingenuity of some of those kids. But my testing showed that we passed Federal standards, so sales were booming.

Then one day we got a report that the tabs on the Squeeze Lock caps were cutting into anti-freeze jugs as they were being applied at the bottling factories. Most got through okay, but there were too many gallon jugs of anti-freeze that were being rendered as leakers. There was talk that we might lose our biggest customer. Top management went into a panic. Our two chief engineers were called into a meeting with all the top dogs at Sunbeam to try and brainstorm a solution. None of them could come up with one.

I hadn't been informed as yet about the problem. The second in command in our Engineering Department, Gary V. Montgomery, filled me in after he had attended the above mentioned meeting. "What are we going to do?", he ask me. I thought about it for a few minutes and I said, "It's only the back edge of the tabs that stop the cap from being removed. Why don't we just round off the front edge of the tabs, since that's the edge that's doing the damage?" It was such a simple idea, but no one had thought of it. Well, that turned out to be the solution. The die makers altered all of our molds and it worked like a charm! We were back in business. I got a few feathers in my cap for that idea. After that, every time I saw a

Squeeze Lock cap on a gallon of anti-freeze in a store, I could say I had a part in designing that. As of this writing, the safety cap that replaced the squeeze lock is still in use on millions of anti-freeze jugs, including Prestone anti-freeze. The inventor was Gary V. Montgomery. This is the same engineer who asked me what we were going to do about the squeeze-lock problem. Incidentally, Sunbeam Plastics is now Berry Global and is located on Route 57, just northeast of the Evansville airport.

In 1975, while still working for Sunbeam, I spotted a beautiful Gibson 12 string Starburst guitar in a pawn shop in downtown Evansville. The price was so good, I had to have it. It sounded wonderful. I had a friend from work that was a pretty good guitar player and he would come over once in a while to jam with me. It got me interested in playing guitar again.

About this time, we moved into an upstairs apartment just above where we had been staying at Fielding Courts. It actually had its own separate bedroom! In the other apartment, we had to sleep on a roll out couch that was made from two sections. It would sometimes split in half and dump us in the floor as we slept! I remember Paul McCartney had just released his "Band On The Run" album when we got our new apartment. We played that album to death on our record player. So music was still a big thing for me.

Sometime after my Squeeze Lock cap "achievement", I was asked to take over as head of the Quality Control Department at Sunbeam. This was a pretty daunting task for a 24 year old from Southern Illinois. I was now responsible for the quality of millions of injection molded products. I was supervisor over people that were twice my age.

One of my Final Inspectors was totally deaf. That took some getting used to. I had to learn how to read lips fast, and I did. We got to the point that we could carry on a pretty good conversation without either one of us actually saying anything. One day I was out on the plant floor and one of the production supervisors asked me a question. Well, out of habit, I mouthed my answer without actually saying anything. He looked at me like he thought I'd lost my mind. Then I explained to him what was going on and we both had a good laugh about it. Even though Earl was deaf, he was my best final inspector. One day I asked him if he was deaf from birth. He told me no, that he came down with spinal meningitis at a young age. He was hospitalized for treatment when one day, unexpectedly, his hearing just left and never came back. Earl was a great guy.

My new job as head of Quality Control required that I travel a lot. If there was a serious quality problem, I was dispatched to troubleshoot it. The good thing about that was, I got to see a lot of America. The bad thing was, I was away from home too much.

OUR FIRST HOME PURCHASE

Rent was high in Evansville, so Birdie and I decided to purchase a single wide trailer. Dad, bless his heart, loaned us the money, and he charged us no interest. We never failed to make our monthly payments to him in a timely manner. By the way, renting is fine for a while but, if you can afford to buy a home, give it careful consideration. Your monthly rent payment suddenly becomes a house payment... something that lets you build equity instead of pouring your money down the rent drainpipe.

We were now living in a pretty nice used trailer at Stuckey's trailer park. If you travel exactly 4 miles north on St. Joseph Avenue from LLoyd expressway, (Route 62), you will find Wimberg Road. Turn right onto Weinberg, and in 600 feet turn right again onto Locust Drive. We lived on the second to last lot on the left hand side of Locust Drive. An interesting note is that, unbeknownst to us, we were living less than 2 miles from Locust Hill Cemetery, which is located on Kratzville road. Buried at Locust Hill Cemetery is my great grandmother, Melissa Parker, who is the daughter of David Parker and the mother of my Grandma Pearl Langford Ward. It's a small world after all.

While living in Evansville, I tried my hand at selling bronze baby shoes for a time. This was mostly on weekends. I was actually a fairly good salesman. I placed lead cards in shoe stores and other retail outlets. The deal was, for every good lead I got, the merchant would get $1. I got leads from every economic level. In general, it seemed that the people with the big homes and nice cars, would not buy. They were already saddled with huge payments and didn't seem to have the money to spare for having their baby's shoes bronzed. But the people in poorer neighborhoods would often buy. I guess this shows where peoples priorities lie. I eventually quit the business, as it was taking up too much of my time and the profits weren't that great. I did get a nicely mounted bronze casting of me and my two sibling's baby shoes out of the deal, though. Mom was the buyer, and I inherited the pedestal from her when she passed. I still have it.

AUDIO TECHNOLOGY DEGREE

I also completed a two year course in Audio Technology through DeVry University during our time in Evansville. There were 10 huge volumes of material I had to learn. As part of the course I also built my own oscilloscope and stereo quadraphonic tuner/amplifier. I have repaired quit a few stereo's over the years, using the electronics I learned in that

course of studies. I also branched out into TV repair for a time. Birdie's mom and dad once took their TV to a repair shop. The repairman told them he couldn't find the problem and that the TV was beyond repair. I took the TV home and ended up fixing it for them. I got lucky on that one! The electronics I learned from DeVry would also come in handy years later, when I was preparing to earn my Illinois State Electrical card.

MIRANDA LYNN MARTIN IS BORN

Birdie didn't like staying at home by herself so much, especially with me traveling now. She was working at a fast food place in Evansville when we learned that she was pregnant with our first child. One day she fainted on the job. That was when she quit working. It was an exciting time! Miranda Lynn Martin was born Sunday, January 18th, 1976. What a special little girl! Miranda's nickname is Mandi Lynn. The middle name was derived from my name, Lyndell. Birdie was now a stay at home mom and I was still traveling too much. But we were enjoying having a beautiful little girl to love and take care of!

TRAVELING FOR SUNBEAM

While working for Sunbeam Plastics, I got to see a lot of the country that I would never have seen otherwise. I saw the Statue of Liberty from about 500 feet in the air. As we were coming in for a landing at Newark Liberty International Airport, the pilot tipped the wing just so we could see Miss Liberty. It was quite a breathtaking sight. I also saw the New York World Trade Center Towers, commonly known as the Twin Towers. This was about 25 years before terrorists took them down. You will read more about that later in the book. I also went to Los Angeles, where I toured Universal Studios in my free time. I got my first view of the ocean at Galveston, Texas, and I crossed the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. I was able to visit Elvis Presley's Graceland mansion on a trip to Memphis. I went to the 3M Company in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I could not believe how huge that facility was. It covered acres. They even had their own shops, including barber shops and coffee shops for their employees. Some other states that I traveled to included Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Georgia, and many others.

**

Speaking of Elvis Presley, we had the privilege of seeing him in concert about 15 months before he died. He performed in Bloomington, Indiana on Thursday, May 27, in the year 1976. Other than the Beatles, he was possibly the biggest worldwide star of the 20th century, although some

Michael Jackson fans might take exception to that. Other famous celebrities I have been fortunate enough to see over the years include Paul McCartney, (A Beatle), Rod Stewart, Sonny and Cher, Kenny Rodgers, Chicago, and many, many others. These performers/groups may not be familiar to you now but, in their time, they were all legends.

***

KIDNEY STONES

One night, I woke up from a sound sleep in agony. Only you men will completely understand this, but it felt as though someone was hitting me "down there" with a baseball bat. At the time, I had no idea what was going on, but I knew I had to get some relief. I woke Birdie up and we bundled up Mandi and headed for the nearest hospital emergency room. The doctor on call was a young Asian fellow with a thick accent. I told him I needed some pain relief bad. I believe he suspected that I was on drugs, because he wouldn't give me anything until he analyzed my urine. When he came back with the results he said, "Hokay, I beliefff you! You haff a kidney stone." He gave me a shot of something, probably morphine, and I could feel it going up my arm and into my body. I got instant relief. They hospitalized me and kept me heavily sedated until the stone finally passed. I remember throwing up from the intense pain. I've had two additional kidney stones over the years, but at least with them, I had an idea of what was going on. I had one nurse tell me that she had experienced both giving birth and having kidney stones. She said she would rather go through childbirth again than have another kidney stone.

DEATH IN THE COAL MINES

It was around this time that dad had a dreadful experience in the mine. He and a fellow worker were both mechanics, (as I later became). They were working on a roof bolter that needed to have a tire replaced. Dad's buddy asked him how he should go about removing it. Dad later told me that the guy would often be argumentative, so dad just told him to use his own judgment. It was lunchtime, so the two of them decide to break for lunch first. After lunch, the other fellow went back to the work place first. Dad said he heard a loud explosion and ran to see what had happened. He told me that when he got to the roof bolter, his buddy was laying against the coal rib, already dead.

Here's what happened. The roof bolter's wheel hubs had 8 bolts in them. Four of them held the wheel on the bolter and the other four held the wheel together so that it would hold pressure. The fellow had cut off the

wrong bolts and when he cut the last one, the tire exploded. Dad told me the hub of the tire was in his buddy's stomach when he got to him. I don't know the condition of that man's soul when he died. I hope he didn't wait until it was too late. For a long time after that, dad would sit and stare off into space. You could tell he was really bothered by what had happened. I think he must have blamed himself, in a way.

BACK TO HARRISBURG

With me traveling too much, and Birdie missing Harrisburg more and more, we started talking about moving back to Harrisburg. Dad had left the carpentry business and was now working for Peabody Coal Company because working outside in the cold winter months had gotten too hard on him. It was during his physical for Peabody that dad learned he had diabetes. I talked to dad to see if he thought he could help get me hired on at the mine where he was working. That was Eagle 2 mine in Shawneetown, and they were hiring at the time. Dad tried to talk me out of it, but said he thought he could, if my mind was made up.

Birdie's parents had a few trailer spaces on their property that they rented out for extra income. We talked to them about a place to stay. It turned out there was a trailer next to them that the owner wanted to rent out. Things were starting to fall into place.

I went for a job interview at Peabody's Eagle 2 mine. With a recommendation from my dad, plus a Bachelor of Science Degree in Industrial Technology, they hired me on the spot. I gave Sunbeam my 2 weeks' notice. Now all we had to do was sell the trailer in Evansville. A young couple bought it from us. We sold it for a profit, plus we had lived in it rent free for a couple of years.

We were now living on the corner of Feazel and Mable streets in Harrisburg, right next to Birdie's mom and dad. This was just 450 feet from where I first met Birdie. Junior and Darryl, Birdies two younger brothers, were still living at home. Her older sister had recently gotten married and was living with her husband Kenny in a trailer on the same property.

WORKING FOR PEABODY

I started working for Peabody in March of 1977. I have often said that I put my college degree into a hole in the ground. The pay was good though, and we were back home.

Dad and I rode to work together with a black gentleman by the name of Willie. He was a fine, burley but gentle man. One day he got into a fight with his wife. I guess she shoved him and he shoved her back. Her head hit the floor and she died. The judged ruled it to be an accident and he never went to jail. But Willie was never the same man after that.

When I started work at Eagle 2, the coal seam was only 4 to 5 feet high. This meant there were very few places where you could stand upright. When you were walking, you walked with your back bent, your head down and your hands clasped behind your back, for balance. If that sounds claustrophobic, it was. Some people couldn't handle it. I knew of one fellow who went underground for his first shift, took one look around and said, "Get me out of here." He went straight back above ground and never returned. I got used to it though, and the further we mined westward, the higher the coal seam became. By the time I left Eagle 2, you could stand upright pretty much anywhere you went. That was a big relief.

At the mine, I dressed for work beside a prince of a man by the name of Jim Morris. Jim was about ten years older than me. He only had one leg, and he wore a prosthetic. After we became good friends, I eventually worked up the nerve to ask him what had happened to his leg. I will paraphrase here the story he told me:

I went hunting by myself one day during deer hunting season. I had my shotgun, a thermos of coffee and some string. When I got to my stand, I tied the thermos and the shotgun to the string and climbed up into the stand. When I got situated, I started pulling my gun and thermos up with the string. About three fourths of the way up, the thermos handle hit the safety on the gun and somehow also pulled the trigger. The blast blew my left leg almost completely off. I knew I was in serious trouble, up in that tree with no one around to help me. Somehow, I managed to climb down, and I started crawling toward my truck. It was about a mile away. I was getting weaker. I looked back at my leg as I was crawling and it was flopping around. When I saw that, I started getting sick to my stomach, and I threw up. I was losing a lot of blood. I didn't think I was going to make it. I finally made it out of the woods and into an open field. Even though I was in sight of my truck now, it might as well have been 10 miles away. Then a miracle happened. A truck came around the corner and I started waving at it with all the strength I had left. It must have been a miracle, because that guy looked my way just at the right time, and he saw me. He was able to get me out of the field and take me to a hospital. They couldn't save my leg, but they saved my life.

I don't know if Jim was a Christian when he had his accident, but I could tell that he was one now, as he told me his story. There is a part two to

this story that I will relate to you later in the book. It's a far more incredible story than even the one you have just read.

Now, I will relate to you a couple of accidents that happened to me at Eagle 2 mine.

In order to direct air to the working face in the mines, we built concrete block walls. Some were hallow and some were solid blocks. After the walls were in place for a while, the overburden of rock would settle down on them and put them under tremendous pressure. One of my jobs in the mine, before I became a Mechanic/Electrician, was to build and maintain the mine "brattices", as they were called. These were the concrete block walls that directed the airflow in the mines. One day, i was assigned to go to a certain area of the mine and knock a hole through one of the solid concrete brattices. I figured it was going to be difficult, so I took a big sledge hammer with me. I beat and beat on that wall until, finally, I was able to get a hole knocked through it. I then went back into the unit where I'd been working, and took my lunch break. Everything seemed okay... until I tried to get up. I wasn't able to. I had injured the muscles in by lower back without even knowing it. I guess, while I was eating, the swelling took hold. Anyway, they had to haul me out of the mine that day, and I was laid up, unable to work for several weeks. Healing was a slow, painful process.

On another occasion, I got knocked unconscious for the first and only time in my life. In the mines, highly compressed air is used to pulverize coal so that it can be loaded onto conveyor belts to be taken out of the mine. The men in charge of the compressed air were called "shooters". When these men are about to "shoot", they yell "Fire in the hole". This meant that everyone in the area should take cover, because an explosion was about to occur. On this particular day, when I heard, "Fire in the Hole", I squatted down and pulled the bill of my hardhat down over my face. I thought I was in the clear. The next thing I knew, I was hit by a massive blow to my chest. It knocked me backward. It knocked me out cold. My dad was working on the same unit as me that day. Someone ran and told him what had happened. When I came to, the first words I heard someone say were, "He's coming around." When I opened my eyes, the first thing I said was, "Where's dad?" When dad stepped forward I said, " I think I'm okay dad."

Since I had been holding my hat, my arm had been in front of my chest, and it took the initial impact. Then my arm was thrown into my chest with enough force to bust some ribs and knock me out. I remember dad riding out of the mine with me, sitting beside my stretcher. At the hospital, they x-rayed me, bandaged me up as best they could and sent me home. When mom saw me, I was still covered with coal dust, but that didn't stop

her from giving me a big hug. Mom had lost a brother to a mine collapse when I was a child. She had also lost her only other brother in a house fire in 1965. She sure was glad to see her son still alive! I believe God used this event to get my attention. I had been ignoring Him for a long time. There is a scripture in the Old Testament that says something to the effect, "Even when the devil means to do something evil, God can use it for good."

It was around this time that a fellow coal miner said something to me that I have never forgotten. He was telling me one day that he was going to have to stop off at the hardware store after work and get some nails. I asked him, "Why don't you just take some nails from here at the mines?" His answer was simple, yet profound. He said, "I don't think the Lord would be very pleased with me if I did that". Those fifteen words hit me pretty hard. God can use just a few simple words from a man or woman of God to help Him change the direction of a person's life. Remember that!

THIS IS THE FBI

One evening, I got a call from the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation). They wanted to make an appointment to meet with me. They wouldn't say why. As you can imagine, this worried me! What had I done that provoked the FBI to want to meet with me? We agreed on a time and place to meet. All I could do was sweat it out and wait for them to show up. The day came, and they arrived in my driveway in a very fancy looking black vehicle. There were two of them, and they were both dressed immaculately in suits and ties. They came to the door and asked me to come out to their vehicle. This was getting worse by the minute.

In the car, they started quizzing me about my time in Evansville. Where did I live? How long did I live there? Who did I work for? What was my phone number in Evansville? Of course, they already knew the answers to all these questions. They had done an investigation on me before they met with me. But they were wanting to find out if I would answer honestly, which I did. After a little more talk, they finally told me what they were up to. They were investigating a, "fence", that was operating in the Evansville area. Well, I had no idea what a fence was, (other than a picket fence), so I just came out and ask them what a fence was. That seemed to break the ice with them. They told me a fence is someone who makes their living by selling stolen goods. They said my Evansville phone number was found in the guy's possession! Well, this upset me quite a bit. To this day, I still have no idea why or how the fence got possession of my phone number. But the two FBI agents believed me. They apologized for scaring me and told me not to worry. Easy for them to say! Then, they let

me go and I never heard from them again. Well, at least I have a great story to tell about the time that I was investigated by the FBI!

BUILDING OUR NEW HOUSE

As I've mentioned, I rode to work with my dad and another fellow during this time. My dad being a carpenter, and a prince of a man, had helped my sister and her husband build their house. This was while Birdie and I were still living in Evansville. One day, on the way to work, dad graciously offered to help me build a house for Birdie and myself. Of course, I jumped at the opportunity. Half the cost of building a house is in the labor, so this was going to be a huge savings for us. We purchased floor plans for the house we liked. It would be a brick home. I figured a house is an investment, so we might as well build a nice one.

Birdie and I bought an acre of ground at 140 Barrett Lane in the Buena Vista area on the western outskirts of Harrisburg (Co-ordinates 37°44'11"N 88°34'39"W). We were able to negotiate a construction loan from Harrisburg National Bank. The interest rate was over 7% at that time, which was pretty high. With a construction loan, you don't have to start making payments until the construction is completed. But we were still being charged interest all this time. Since dad and I were doing the labor, no down payment was required. Banks usually require a 20% down payment on home loans.

With the land purchase completed, it was now time to start building. Dad and I threw a couple of shovels, some 2 by 4's, a tape measure and some string into the back of his truck, drove to the building site and set about building a house. We laid out the foundation and started digging the footing by hand. We would work a full shift at the mine, then work on the house for several hours afterward. Those were some long, hard days. I remember one night I was actually too tired to sleep. I never knew that was possible.

I would like to say that my dad was a master carpenter, and more. He knew how to lay out and build a foundation. He knew how to frame up a house. He knew how to wire a house, plumb it, do the finish work, install cabinets, and all the rest. Needless to say, I learned a lot from him. The only things I hired done were the installation of the roof shingles and the brick work. Had I known at the time, I would have left the of the house un-bricked, because being bricked all the way around meant that the house would be assessed at a higher tax rate. If I had left the back un-bricked, the house would have been assessed at a lower rate and saved us a bundle on property taxes over the years. In part, it was the ever

increasing property taxes that eventually led to us sell the house and moving out by mom. There will be more about this later in the book.

While we were building the house, the lady whose trailer we were renting decided she needed it for her daughter to live in. We were going to have to move before our new house was finished. We asked my dad and mom if we could stay with them until it was completed. Of course, they said yes. They were empty nesters by now, so they had plenty of room.

When we finally did move into our new house, there was only a little work left to do. Filling in dirt around our septic tank was one of them. If it were to come a heavy rain, the tank would float out of the ground. I had to get that taken care of as soon as possible. We went to bed in our new house that first night feeling pretty good about things. Then it started raining. It rained so hard that the sound woke us up. I jumped out of bed, threw on some clothes and grabbed a shovel. I spent a good portion of that night out in the pouring rain, shoveling dirt in around the septic tank. Thankfully it didn't float out, but I was one tired puppy the next day at work.

SOUND FINANCIAL ADVICE

Now that construction was complete, it was time for the bank to give me a payment book. I had decided to go with a 15 year loan, rather than the traditional 30 year loan. You can save **MANY** thousands of dollars in interest that way. The loan total came to $28,000, and that included house and property. That's about $134,000 in 2023 dollars. The house and property together were worth well more than what we owed on it.

The bank mailed me a very thick payment book with 180 payments of $276.91 per month. That was a big payment in 1978. In 2023 dollars that would be a monthly payment of $1,270. I wrote that check every single month for 15 years. If you multiply it out, it comes to $49,844. Subtract from that the $28,000 we actually borrowed, and you will discover that the interest over 15 years came to about $22,000. If we had taken out a 30 year loan, the interest would have been over $39,000. So you can see that we saved about $17,000, (in 1978 dollars), in interest with the 15 year loan, as opposed to a 30 year loan. Of course, as you are reading this, those numbers will be **much** higher due to inflation. For example, $17,000 in 1978 money would be equivalent to $81,000 in 2023 dollars. That's how much interest money we saved by doing a 15 year loan, as opposed to a 30 year loan.
I'm telling you this so that when it comes your time to buy a house, you will consider doing the same thing I did. If you can afford the higher monthly payment, go for a 15 year mortgage. If you feel you must take out a 30 year loan, you can still double up on the payments and save the

same amount in interest. But my observation of human nature has taught me that you will always find someplace else to spend the money, and you won't ever double up on the house payments. So think carefully before taking out a 30 year loan!

As I mentioned earlier, because we built our own home, we didn't have to come up with a down payment for our home loan. Otherwise, we likely would have. So think about saving up for that down payment. As I am writing this book, the U.S. government has low interest programs with smaller interest rates and smaller down payments for **first time** home buyers. If those are still available when you are buying or building, look into them. But keep in mind, the more you can pay up front, the less you will have to finance. For existing homes, check out their past utility rates and taxes before buying. Don't buy a money pit!

**

As long as I'm offering financial advice... here is some advice especially geared toward you younger readers. If you aren't financially inclined, you can skip through this section of the book, but I strongly urge you to read it.

Picture a 3 legged stool. If it only had one leg, it would obviously be very unstable. If it had two legs, it would still be unstable. But with three legs, it would be stable. Now think forward to when you will retire. In your retirement years, you want your financial situation to be stable. That means it needs to have at least 3 legs. The 3 legs in my foundation are:

Leg 1) A good pension. When you settle on your life's work, you need to be working for a company that offers a good pension plan. A good pension plan will provide you with a monthly check and good health insurance when you retire. Some people actually end up with two pensions, if they work long enough at two different jobs. I, for example, have a pension from the United Mine Workers of America, (UMWA), and another one from the Illinois Mutual Retirement Fund (IMRF). The second one was from my time working for the Harrisburg Unit 3 School District, where I did substitute teaching and student aid work. I also taught GED classes for Southeastern Illinois College and got a lump sum retirement settlement from the Teacher Retirement System (TRS).

Leg 2) Personal savings. After tithing, you should pay **yourself, every paycheck**. We call this a personal savings plan. Many employers offer direct deposit into personal savings plans, such as a 401K or IRA, (Individual Retirement Account). As of this writing, these are tax differed plans. This means that you don't pay taxes on your contributions until retirement, when tax rates are usually much lower. Some employers will match your contributions up to a certain amount. I strongly urge you to

take full advantage of this, up to the maximum amount allowed, as it is often a 100% return on your investment. The amount you "pay yourself" each month is up to you, but more is better. I found that if I had money taken directly from my paycheck before I ever saw it, we didn't really miss it that much. But if the money came to us first, we always spent it instead of putting it into savings.

If your employer does not offer a saving plan, you should set something up for yourself with a reputable financial institution. I use Edward R. Jones. If you are young as you are reading this, there is some potential good news here. If you start young and contribute faithfully, you can potentially build up quite a large nest egg for retirement. Historically, the stock market has returned almost 10% **OVER THE LONG HAUL**. There are ups and downs in the market but, historically, they have averaged out on the plus side. I had a friend who withdrew all their savings during one big dip in the market. They withdrew their savings just when it had dropped significantly, which meant they locked in their loss. We left our investments alone and within a few years the loss had reversed and we realized a big gain.
Investing in stocks always involves risk. I think it's best to invest in both stocks and bonds. Typically, when one of them goes down, the other goes up. This acts as sort of a safety valve. Your investment firm will want to know how much risk you are willing to take. High risk means you have more stocks than bonds, but with the potential for more profit. Lower risk means you have more bonds and fewer stocks, but with a lower earning potential. You have to decide how much of a risk you are willing to take. My investment firm offers four levels of risk. Again, more risk means more potential profit, whereas less risk means less potential profit, but more security. Also, it is advisable to have enough cash-on-hand to get by for several months, should you be laid off from work unexpectedly.

Leg 3) Social Security. The third leg of a good retirement plan is Social Security (SS). At this time, SS is projected to become insolvent by around 2035. The government will have to intervene, if it is to be saved. There is talk of privatizing Social Security. This would mean that, instead of the government deducting money from your paycheck each month, the money would instead go directly to you and you would do with it what you think best. Human nature being what it is, I'm afraid this would mean that most folks would just take it and spend it. This would knock one leg out from under their retirement stool. Should SS become privatized, I strongly suggest you have the money taken directly from your paycheck and invested into your personal savings plan.

If Social Security remains as it is now, you will be given a choice as to when you start drawing a monthly retirement check from the government. At this writing, 62 is the youngest age at which you could start drawing a

SS check. The earlier your start drawing, the smaller your monthly check will be from then on out. If you wait longer, the checks will be larger, but keep in mind that you will draw fewer of them, because of age. In general, the total amount drawn works out to be about the same. Individually, it all depends on how long you expect to live. A rough gauge would be, did your ancestors live long lives?

Try to make your career something that you enjoy. Life is far too short to spend it working at a job you don't like. After the mines closed, I did some teaching and found it to be very rewarding. Teachers have the opportunity to teach values to children that they may not get at home. There will always be a need for teachers, so you would have a secure career. In the same way, there are always going to be sick people, so a job in the health industry should also be secure. Her too, you would be helping people. People will also have to eat, so a job in the food industry should also be secure.

***

JASON DANIEL MARTIN IS BORN

We had been living at Barrett Lane for about a year when we learned that Birdie was pregnant with our second child. We were hoping for a boy. Birdie wanted to use the same doctor from her first pregnancy, so Jason Daniel Martin was born at Saint Mary's Hospital in Evansville, on Tuesday, August 21, 1979. What a special little boy! Both Jason and Daniel are biblical names. Like his sister, Jason was a delightful child. He would grow up to love sports and hunting, both of which he excelled at. More about that later. Birdie thought two children would be enough, so when Jason was born, she had the necessary surgery. A few years later I had one of the most vivid dreams I've ever had in my lifetime. In the dream, a beautiful little boy was just standing there, looking me directly in the eye. I would judge him to have been about two years old. He never said a word. He just looked at me. I think this was the second son we were supposed to have. But we had failed to consult with God.

ANSWERED PRAYERS

I believe God deals with us in seasons. I had been drifting for a long time. Not taking my family to church. Not thinking much about God. I mentioned earlier that Birdie's mom was a Christian. She wasn't, "in your face", about it, but she had been quietly praying for Birdie and me. As a result of her prayers, I started thinking about the fact that I had a responsibility to raise my kids in church. I didn't want to repeat mom and

dad's mistake. I feel sure Dora's prayers had a lot to do with it. And God had a lot to do with Dora prayaing.

There was a very clear cut moment when all of this came to a head. I was on the cage coming out of the mine at the end of a shift. Just as we reached the surface, the distinct thought came to me that I needed to sit things right with God. This was the Holy Spirit at work. Then an equally distinct thought came to me that I was still young and there would be plenty of time for that later. This was the devil at work. My next thought was the remembrance of hearing a preacher from my distant past warning that this was the exact tactic satan uses on young people. Satan is very real, my beloved. That did it for me. I made the commitment right then and there that I would start taking my family to church. This was my turning point. We all need a turning point, where we have a change of heart.

Dora's prayers were being answered. She was, at that time, attending a Social Brethren church in the community of Wasson, which is a few miles west of Eldorado. As it, "happened", the next Sunday, April 6, 1980, was Easter Sunday. Do you see how God works? Well, that Easter Sunday I loaded my little family up and we went off to church for the first time. The devil wasn't giving up that easily though. The next Sunday he talked me into not going. But I believe that whole church must have been praying for us by that time. The following Sunday we went to church again, and after that, it was seldom that we missed a services, including Wednesday nights.

Like I said, the devil doesn't give up easily. He will try to make Sunday's difficult for you, anyway he can. He tried to make it hard for us to go to church. You just have to make up your mind that he's not going to succeed. You just keep going. God will bless your efforts.

**

I believe I'm supposed to add in a parenthetic here. When Dora was pregnant with her fourth child, she nearly died. The doctors had told her not to have another baby, because of difficulty with her last. But a few years later, she found herself expecting her fourth child. One day she told us her personal experience concerning that pregnancy. I paraphrase:

I was having a really hard time with the pregnancy. One day I was sitting in the bathroom and I was bleeding heavily. The thought came to me that if I would just, "let go", the baby would self abort and I would be through with all this. While setting there with this thought running through my head, I looked to my right and I could see through the closed bathroom door! And I could see through the trailer wall, out into the yard. There, under our Mimosa tree, a single leaf started spinning in a whirlwind. The

whirlwind started moving toward the trailer and getting larger. It came in through the trailer wall and through the closed bathroom door! There, standing by my side, was Jesus. I tried to look up at Him. I could see His body, but I couldn't raise my head high enough to see His face. He said seven words to me. "If you do that, you will die." And then He was gone."

Dora ended up carrying the baby to full term and delivered a healthy baby boy, Darryl Brent Bayne. I've never had any kind of visual experience like that, but I had a dream that I will relate to you later in the book.

***

At Wasson church, there was good preaching and good music. We didn't have a large congregation, and the choir was small. As we listened to the choir singing week after week, I started learning all of these wonderful gospel songs. The choir used the hymnals, "Heavenly Highways", and "New Songs of Inspiration". The choir would encourage those of us in the congregation to sing along. I started trying to sing and was surprised to learn that I could carry a tune now, unlike when I was younger and trying to sing, "Going Back To Houston" into my tape recorder! My voice was not sweet and my vocal range was small, but I could sing. I eventually worked up the nerve to start singing in the choir. There were songs like, "I'll Fly Away", "Standing On The Promises", "Leaning On The Everlasting Arms", "Come and Dine" and so many more. Now that I could sing a little, maybe I would be able to write???

I learned to love those church songs, and soon the desire came to me to learn how to play them on my guitar. I had sold my 12 string Gibson, because it was hard for me to keep it in tune, but I had a pretty good little 6 string, and I set out to learn the chords to these new songs. I don't remember how it happened, but the preacher found out that I could play. He already knew that I was singing in the choir. Soon after that, we had a revival planned. Our Pastor, Brother Wayne Bowers, asked me if I would be willing to get up in front of the crowd and sing a song during the revival. I could choose which night. I was terrified.

The night came for me to sing. I had practiced, "I'll Fly Away". The church house was full. I didn't want the congregation looking at me, so I had a plan. I asked everyone to take their hymnal book from the back of the seat in front of them and turn to the correct page. Then I ask everyone to stand. Now they were all looking down instead of looking at me. It's surprising how a congregation will do whatever they can to help you out. Anyway, the song went over well and now I was a performer in the work of the Lord!

It was some time after the revival that the Lord called Birdie to the altar one Sunday night. We were singing a hymn when the pastors wife did something out of character for her. At the end of the song, she spoke out and said, "Let's sing that last verse again". Well, Birdie was under conviction, and she had just prayed, saying, "If You have them sing one more verse, Lord, I'll go to the alter". So when they started singing another verse, she went forward. Of course, I went right behind her. She accepted the Lord into her life that night!

Not long after that, a friend of Brother Bowers, (they called him Junior), came down to visit from up north, and he attended one of our services. During the service he stood up to say something, but Jason started crying. Brother Junior wasn't able to say what the Lord was telling him to say. So he sat back down. I think the devil was pinching Jason, so to speak! The devil will even stoop to using a little baby to fight against God's will. Junior was scheduled to preach that service, so during his message he was able to finish what he was trying to say earlier. He said something to the effect that when a person wants to repent and come back to the Lord, they need to do their "first works" over. I discovered much later that the phrase "first works" is taken from Revelation 2:5. I wasn't exactly sure what that meant, but I felt that Brother Junior's statement was directed at me. I wasn't sure what I was supposed to do, but Birdie had just accepted the Lord and needed to be baptized, so I figured I would be baptized again when she was. We were both baptized in a small lake just northwest of Stonefort on White Oak Street, which is also known as Pleasant Valley Road.

I became very zealous for the Lord. I started carrying a pocket Bible in the mines with me and could be seen reading it at every opportunity. People began to notice. One of them started attending our church and testified one day that seeing me read the Bible so much at was what drew her in.

I organized a neighborhood outreach. We went door to door inviting people to church. One old fellow cussed me out. At another house, I was on the couch, inviting the guy to church when the front screen door flew open and in walked a huge goose. It jumped up on the couch and plopped down right beside me. He never came to church though.

One day in the coal mines, a fellow worker and I had been dropped off near the unit where we were to be working that day. He was assigned to work at the belt drive outside of the unit, and I was to walk on in to work in the unit. As we walked together, I invited him to church. He thanked me for the invitation but otherwise didn't have much of a response. As I left him and proceeded on toward the unit, the most wonderful feeling I have ever experienced in my life overpowered me! This was the Lord blessing

me for inviting that man to church. I've never felt that feeling again. I wish I would.

On another day in the mines, my boss asked me something and I lied to him. I was immediately convicted of it and told him that I had just lied to him. Then I proceeded to tell him the truth. He had the oddest look on his face. One day soon after that, he took me off to the side and asked me what had happened to me. I told him I'd been saved. "Okay", was all he said, but I'm sure this had a lasting impact on him.

Mom and dad had also noticed the change in me. I started witnessing to them and inviting them to church. Soon, they started attending our church! Years later, mom told me that dad had come to her one day and talked to her about me. He told her, and I paraphrase, "Buddy has made a change in his life, and we can't let him down now." They didn't either.

I'd like to say that it's possible for the devil to use even our own zealousness against us. I'm afraid that I may have hurt our pastor by implying that he wasn't as zealous about certain things as I thought he should be. When he stopped pasturing our church, I wondered if I had anything to do with it. I pray that I didn't. The scriptures are very clear that we are not to touch, (insult), God's anointed. I did something similar at another church. I have asked for God's forgiveness. I pray that the Lord brought good out of what satan meant for evil. (Genesis 50:20). It wasn't too long after Brother Bowers left the church that we moved our membership to the Dorrisville Social Brethren Church in Harrisburg.

It was during this time that God actually spoke to me for the first time. I remember exactly where I was when it happened. It wasn't an audible voice. It was a still, small voice in my head, (1 Kings 19:12). It was like a thought in my mind that I didn't originate. He only said three words: "The heart quickens." I had no idea what that meant. I wondered, was my heart going to start beating faster? He didn't explain. Then one day while reading my Bible I came across the following scripture. "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you.", (Romans 8:11). When I looked up the Biblical meaning of the work quicken, I found that it means to bring back to life. I had been spiritually dead, and had been brought back to life.

I have found it to be true, at least in my experience, that God rarely speaks directly to us. So when He speaks, it is of the utmost importance that we listen with great care, and that we prayerfully meditate on what He has told us. However, I believe He does nudge us in the right direction often, without us being aware of it. Of course, He also speaks to us through the Bible, if we will read it prayerfully. Imagine that you pour your

heart out to someone in a long letter, but then they don't bother to read it. That's probably how God feels when we don't bother to read His love letter to us - The Bible. I will have more to say on this later.

THE FATHER OF LIES

The devil can speak to us also, just as he spoke to Jesus in the wilderness. You can find that account in Matthew, chapter 4. We need to be careful who we listen to. If the words we hear, or the thoughts we think, contradict the Bible, we can be sure they aren't coming from God. Satan is very deceitful. The Bible tells us that he was a liar from the beginning. He is called the father of lies. When he spoke to Jesus in the wilderness, he misquoted Old Testament scriptures. Jesus was a student of the scriptures and He was able to defend Himself by quoting the scriptures back to satan accurately. After several unsuccessful attempts to fool Jesus, satan left Him *for a season*. But he would be back. He will come after you repeatedly as well. We are told to arm ourselves with the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, (Ephesians 6:17). In other words, commit scriptures to memory and have them ready to use at all times, both to defend yourself against the devil and also to use in witnessing to others. You may have noticed that I don't capitalize the name of satan unless it's at the beginning of a sentence. That's because he doesn't deserve for his name to be capitalized.

I mentioned that the Bible refers to satan as the father of lies. The first lie ever uttered must have came from his lips. The Bible also tells us that satan roams about as a roaring lion, looking for whoever he can find to destroy. Satan will lie to YOU. You may think satan doesn't talk to you, but he does. He will place evil thoughts and lies into your head... if he can. At the risk of being repetitive, I say again that this is why it is vitally important for us to know what the Bible teaches. Armed with this knowledge, we can discern when our thoughts are being manipulated. If you have a thought that is contrary to the Word of God, put it out of your mind and run from it. With this in mind, I'd like to list a few of the lies that satan loves to try and make us believe. His objective is to cause us trouble here on earth, and to keep us out of heaven. He can't go there, and he doesn't want us to go there either.

HERE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE LIES THAT THE DEVIL WANTS TO PUT INTO OUR HEADS:

1. <u>As long as I do what I think is right, I will go to heaven.</u>

No! The Bible plainly teaches that all of our righteousness is like filthy rags when compared to the righteousness of God. (Isaiah 64:6) You can't be good enough to earn your way into heaven.

2. Christians are hypocrites, and if they make it to heaven, then I will too. I live a better life than most of them do.
No! Don't compare how you live to how others live. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23). We don't get to heaven based on how good a life we live as compared to others. Who wants to the best sinner who ever went to hell? Our salvation is based solely on our faith in God's grace. (Ephesians 2:8-9) Grace means something that is not deserved. None of us deserve salvation. It is a free gift. We can never earn it or even deserve it. Have you accepted your free gift?

3) I've been too bad of a person to get to go to heaven. God would never let me in because I don't deserve it.
No! While there is some truth in these statements, it is mixed in with a lie in order to fool you. It's true that you don't deserve to go to heaven. None of us do! But it's not true that you have been so bad that God won't forgive you and accept you. Only Jesus never sinned, so He is the only one who didn't deserve to be punished. Yet He took our punishment on our behalf. We have to put our trust in the righteousness of Jesus, not on our own righteousness.

4) I'm young and I have plenty of time to take care of salvation later.
How do you know how long you have? Thousands of people die every day, and few of them wake up on the day they die with the thought, "This will be my last day on earth." 2nd Corinthians 6:2 says: For God says, "At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you. Indeed, the right time is now. Today is the day of salvation." (NLT)

5) I have commited the unpardonable sin. I'd like to be saved, but it's too late for me now. No! If you are concerned about this, it is proof that you haven't done it. A person who has committed the unpardonable sin will have no desire to find God.

6) I asked God to save me, but I don't know if He did. Satan loves to use this one. Think about this. Would God sacrifice His Son on the cross so that you could be saved and then refuse to save you when you come to Him? NO! If we have doubts about our salvation, it's because we are depending on our own efforts to save ourselves. Lay the burden of your salvation where it belongs, at the foot of the cross. The price for salvation was paid 2,000 years ago. We don't have to pay it again. You don't have to earn it or deserve it. Accept the free gift of salvation!

7) I believe that others can be saved, but I just don't think I can be.
Not true! John 3:16 is probably the best known scripture in the Bible. It says: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." There is an old song that says, "Whosoever surely meaneth me." You are a whosoever. Whosoever means you. You are included!

**

I just said that the devil speaks to us. I'd like to relate to you a chilling story that a member of our family once told me in confidence. I will not reveal his name. Once again, I will paraphrase this true story as best as I can:

One day I went camping by myself in the Shawnee National Forrest. It was just me and God, deep in the woods... or so I thought. It was getting dark and I had built a campfire. As a young man, I had often wonder to myself if the devil really existed. Suddenly, and without warning, an apparition appeared to me in the flames of my campfire. It took on the form of satan. He called me by name and said, "What is it that you want?" I was too afraid to answer him and so I just hid my face. Then, just as suddenly, he was gone.

***

BECOMING A DEACON

Wasson church was in need of a Deacon, and Pastor Bowers asked me if I would serve. I said I would, so the Social Brethren Presbytery had a call meeting and examined me. They voted to accept me. About a week later, I was ordained in a Sunday morning service with the laying on of hands. I don't believe I was properly prepared to serve. I hadn't had time yet to become a mature Christian in the way that I think a Deacon needs to be.

All during this time, I was in training but didn't know it. I learned dozens of songs from the church hymnals and started noticing how they were structured. Usually, there would be three verses, each followed by a repeating chorus. I noticed that the piano player would always play an intro at the beginning of each song. I learned by ear how to tell when I needed to change chords on my guitar and which chords to use while playing the songs. I learned to tell what keys the songs were in. When the key didn't fit my narrow vocal range, I learned to transpose to another key. Now could I write songs? It wouldn't be long! Fortunately for us, God works on his own time frame, not ours. He knows things we don't know. It may look to us as though He's forgotten us, but He knows exactly what

He's doing and how to work around our shortcomings and unfaithfulness. God never makes a mistake!

A DEATH AND A DREAM

Before I tell you about my dream, I will relate to you what happened on December 8, 1980. It was my 30th birthday. Early on the morning of December 9th, I was on my way to pick up one of my riding buddy's for work. As I was driving, I heard a John Lennon song on the radio. John Lennon was the founding member of the Beatles. I didn't think much about it, but then they immediately played another John Lennon song. I thought that was kind of odd. Then, after the second song, the radio announcer came on and said, "John Lennon, shot dead last night at the age of 40." This shook me. I had grown up listening to the music of the Beatles, and John Lennon had written many of their songs. In fact, I still have the lyrics to his song, "In My Life", framed and hanging on a wall in my house. John Lennon had been murdered on my 30th birthday. It happened outside of his home in the Dakota Apartment Building, just across the street from Central Park in New York City.

Not too long after Lennon's death, God gave me a dream. In the dream I heard a song. As soon as the song ended, I woke up. I could only remember the first 17 words of the song, plus the melody that went with them. The words were: "Look all around you and enjoy the love. Be sure to share it with the Savior above." This was life changing. I felt as though I would be able to sit down and complete the song myself. I went straight to my guitar and found the chords to fit the melody. Sure enough, I was able to finish the song! The best part of that song is the part that I remembered from the dream, but I had taken my first baby step in song writing!

I titled my first song, "The Savior Is Love". In it, God is reminding us that we are surrounded by His love, and also by the love of our friends and family. He is also reminding us that we need to share that love with Jesus, the one who gave His life in order to save us. Salvation is free to "whosoever will" accept Him as Lord and Savior (John 3:16). Below are the lyrics to the song. Other than the first seventeen words, the lyrics were written by me. They aren't very polished, but they were a starting point. If we will use the gifts God gives us, He will give us more. Being faithful to our calling is key.

#1 The Savior Is Love

Look all around you and enjoy the love. Be sure to share it with the Savior above. (Ch) His love is all around you. His love, it will astound you. His love. For the Savior is love. (Vs) If you believe that He rose from the grave and that He loves you, and that He can save, (Ch) Discard the chains that have bound you, and then, you will know He has found you, with love. For the Savior is love. And He wants to share His love with you. And He hopes that you will love Him too. (Tag) If you'll only let Him in. (End)

That dream came to me in early 1981. I found that I was now able to sit down and write songs from scratch! Like anything else, it was a learning process. You have to put into practice whatever gift God gives you, if you want to develop it and use it for His glory. I wrote 12 songs that year. Songs two through four weren't very good, but I kept on writing. The fifth song is actually a very good children's song titled, "Noah's Ark". The melody is very good and the message in the lyrics are, I think, even better. The song explains how the Ark protected only those who heeded Noah's many warnings about the coming flood. Everyone who got aboard the ark was saved from drowning. Many tried to board the Ark after the doors were shut and the rain began, but then it was too late for them. The song also explains how Jesus is our Ark of safety today. It is He who saves us from drowning in our own sins... If we will climb on board! It's our choice.

#5 Noah's Ark

Now long ago, in days of old, when all the world was mean, the Lord looked down upon the earth and said, I'll wash it clean. I'll cause the rain to flood the plains and wash away the sin, and fill the Earth with peace again. If I can find a righteous man. (Ch) Noah, take your stand. I'm looking for a righteous man, to fill the earth with peace again. (Vs) When Noah heard the call he said, "I'll build the Lord an ark. I'll build it long. I'll make it strong. Get ready to embark!" But no one would believe him. They didn't heed the call, until the rain began to fall. The devil had deceived the all. (Ch) Noah, build that ark. The storm clouds are growing dark. But no one climbed aboard the ark. (Vs) Now all the folks who missed the boat, they had to learn to swim. I'll bet they wished a thousand times that they had listened in. When Noah tried to tell 'em, all they had to say, was "Save it for a rainy day." They waited till it was too late. (Ch) Noah warned them all, before the rain began to fall. But they refused to heed the call. (Vs) The Lord is telling us today to climb aboard the ark. The storm clouds are gathering and things are looking dark. If you're not ready for the storm, you'd better come on in. Today we have an ark again. And Jesus is the ark, my friend. (Ch) Children, come on in. The Lord is coming back again. The Lord is coming back again!

God is still warning us today to get aboard the Ark of safety. He is Jesus Christ. The Bible says there is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

**

But what about someone who is raised as a Buddhist, a Jew, or a Muslim? They haven't been taught that Jesus is Lord. How will they be saved? Is this fair? I once heard a Christian who was raised as a Buddhist give his testimony. This retelling is paraphrased:

I was raised in India as a Buddhist. Each day at school we were required to bow down and worship a statue of Buddha. Even at a young age, something told me that I should not be worshiping a manmade statue. It seemed clear to me that a statue could not have created me. I dared not tell anyone about these thoughts. If I did, I would be rejected by my family and barred from my community. As I grew into a teenager, these feelings continued to bother me. Finally, I cried out to a God I didn't know. I told Him I wanted to know who He was. Then, one night He spoke to me in a dream. He told me that if I would go to a certain mountain, I would find a cave there. In the cave, I would find the answer to my questions. I knew of the mountain, but not of the cave. I gathered a few small provisions and sat out in the middle of the night to find God. As I walked, I gazed up into an ink black sky filled with a thousand stars. Who was this God who made such a wondrous canvas above me? Just then, God spoke to me. "I Am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob". What did this mean? I continued on, not hearing anything further. On the third day, I reached the mountain. I could see the outline of a cave entrance high above. I climbed until I reached it. What could be in there? As I approached, the day was bright, so I could see perhaps 30 feet into the cave. Near the back was a large rock. It seemed to have something laying on it. I breathlessly approached the rock. There, covered in a thick layer of dust, was an open book. I picked it up and carried it into the light. On the front, it said The Holy Bible. On the page it was opened to, I read these words: *"And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations."* (Exodus 3:15 KJV) I had found the true God!

Isn't that a fascinating testimony? So, I believe that God is available to anyone who sincerely seeks Him with their whole heart. This is true even if a person has been raised to believe something else, or if they have been raised to believe in nothing at all. Well then, what about those who choose not to seek out a relationship with their maker? The Bible says that we are all without excuse: *Ever since the world was created, people*

have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can see clearly His invisible qualities - His eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. (Roman's 1:20 NLT).

***

ABOUT THE MUSIC

As I mentioned in "Notes To The Reader" at the front of the book, I'm including with the hardcopy version of the book, (if any), CD's containing several of my most liked songs. I may also include one or two songs with my vocals on them, space permitting. For the most part though, my demos have been recorded by Nashville professionals. The CD's will be attached inside the back cover. Please keep them with the book. If you are reading the electronic version of the book, instructions on how to hear the songs online are included in the "Notes To The Reader" section near the front of the book.

Over the years, people have ask me which is my favorite song of all those I've written. That's a tough question, as I have about 125 to choose from. But I do have several that hold a special place in my heart. By and large, those are the songs that I've had recorded professionally in Nashville. At this writing, there are, I think, 33 demos. The following songs would have to be somewhere in my top 10 list. I will list them in alphabetical order: A Better Man, Be About The Master's Business, (The) Blue Hills of Heaven, God Loves Mercy, I talked to An Angel, My Song Comes From You Lord, Pass It On, Quite a Lovely Day, and Why Don't You Talk To Me? I've also written some Christmas songs that I'm quite fond of. These are: The Christmas Lamb, Christmas Is A Magic Time Of Year, Christmas Isn't Christmas Without You and (I Saw) Santa's Reindeer Fly. Dan Schaffer did the vocal's on several of these songs. Dan played guitar and sang backup for George Jones. Also for Shania Twain, when she was one of the top country artist in the United States. Her first top 10 song charted in 1995 and she has continued creating music and performing into the 2020's. George has passed on.

I currently have 2 albums online at various websites such as iTunes, Amazon Music, Spotify, Pandora, YouTube, and a variety of others. The first album is titled "I Talked To An Angel". The second is titled "Good News!" You can find them by searching my name. Some of these websites require a subscription. Many of them sell the songs as downloads. Others, such as YouTube, are free. I have received a few royalty checks from sales and streaming of these albums over the years. That first royalty check was quite a thrill! I've given all my royalties back to God in the form of tithes and offerings. All of my demo's can be found for free as described elsewhere in the book. Most easily, they can be found by going

to **audio.com/lyndell-martin. (Be sure to include the dash between lyndell and martin.)** Instrumentals of some songs not otherwise demoed are included there. See page 6 for more details.

I've never made a concerted effort to promote my songs to publishers. I did once send a song to Dolly Parton. She had one of her assistants write back and thank me for the offer. She explained that Dolly had a standing policy of not accepting songs from others due to possible conflicts with her own songwriting. If you, as my descendant, ever wish to pursue the promotion and/or publishing of any of my songs, you have my permission. The songs are all copyrighted, so I think you have the legal right to do so. My primary desire is that the songs be used for the glory of God and the blessing of mankind.

As of 2023, I have copyrighted 115 songs. The actual hard copies of the Certificates of Copyright can be found in my songbook titled "The Songs Of Lyndell R. Martin. There are 7 Copyright certificates there, covering the 115 songs. The same songbook also contains the sheet music of over 100 of my songs. And it contains some poems that I've written over the years. There is a picture of the songbook cover in the appendix. The copyrights can also be accessed online at:

PublicRecords.copyright.gov

On the above web page, click "Advanced Search".
A new page will appear.
Under 'Field Heading' choose "All Names".
Under 'Search Type' choose "As a Phrase".
In the search box, type Lyndell Ray Martin and then click on "Search".

You can see the search results below. I used the "Sort By" box on the web page to sort them into chronological order. Please note that each copyright group contains several songs. The only exception is the song 'More Like You', the first song I ever copyrighted.

Top search results: 7
Displaying results 1 – 7 of 7

(0) Select all | Actions | Date (Oldest) | Highlight on | 1

1. Full Title: More like you.
Registration Number: PAU000663920 Date: 1984-10-26
Type of Work: Music Claimant: Lyndell Ray Martin

2. Full Title: Lyndell R. Martin collective works :v. 1.
Registration Number: PAU000856275 Date: 1986-06-02
Type of Work: Music Claimant: Lyndell Ray Martin
Search term: "Lyndell Ray Martin" under Application Title

3. Full Title: Lyndell Ray Martin collective works :vol. 2.
Registration Number: PAU001825038 Date: 1993-12-29
Type of Work: Music Claimant: Lyndell Ray Martin
Search term: "Lyndell Ray Martin" under Title

4. Full Title: Lyndell R. Martin collective works.
Registration Number: PAU001954633 Date: 1995-02-27
Type of Work: Music Claimant: Lyndell Ray Martin, 1950-

5. Full Title: Collective works :vol. 3.
Registration Number: PAU002039228 Date: 1995-11-03
Type of Work: Music Claimant: Lyndell Ray Martin, 1950-

6. Full Title: Collective Works Vol. 4.
Registration Number: PAU003420787 Date: 2009-06-30
Type of Work: Music Claimant: Lyndell Ray Martin,
Search term: "Lyndell Ray Martin" under Application Title

7. Full Title: A Better Man and 9 Other Unpublished Works.
Registration Number: SRU001489168 Date: 2021-12-14
Type of Work: Sound Recording (Music) Claimant: Lyndell Ray Martin,

Filter by date
Select date type
Select date
Start Date
yyyy/mm/dd
End Date
yyyy/mm/dd
Apply | Clear

Filter results
Collapse all | Clear

Record type	
Registration	7
Published	0
Unpublished	7
Unspecified	0
Recordation	0
Registration class	
Performing Arts (PA)	6
Sound Recordings (SR)	1
Registration item types	
Music	6
Sound Recording (Music)	1

**

There are also links to many of my songs on my desktop computer, (which will likely be gone when you read this). But if not, you can access them from my desktop by double clicking on the desktop icons such as, BUDDY'S SHEET MUSIC, BUDDY'S COPYRIGHTS, BUDDY'S SONG DEMOS and BUDDY'S BAND-IN-A-BOX SONGS. Band-In-A-Box is a software program used for generating backing soundtracks for many of my songs. The songs on Band-In-A-Box include lyrics and melody, but no vocals. You can listen to them in the Band-In-A-Box program by double clicking, (quickly), the icon on the desktop. That will bring up a list of the songs. Then, choose one of them by double clicking on it, and you will be able to play the song. If you are technically inclined, you can also print out sheet music from the program. The songs are also copied onto a USB drive in my office desk.

***

As previously stated, many of **my best songs are most easily accessed at AUDIO.COM. Go to audio.com/lyndell-martin. Be sure to include the dash between lyndell and martin.** Instrumentals of some songs not otherwise demoed may be located there as well. Additionally, I have stored recordings of some of my best songs online at ARCHIVE.ORG. Other works and events, including a one hour recording of my dad retelling his World War 2 history, are also on the Archive.org site. For your convenience, I have repeated below the instructions to access those items:

1. Go to the website Archive.org
2. Ignore the "Wayback Machine" search box, if the website still features it.
3. Find the other search box and click inside. (You may have to scroll down to find it.)

4. Select "search metadata" below the search box, if It's not already selected.
5. In the search box, type **LYNDELLMARTIN@YAHOO.COM** and hit enter.
6. All my files should appear. Find the one you want and click on it.

**

Consider for a moment the power of music. It is the soundtrack of our lives. When was the last time you went through a day without hearing music in one form or another? Companies use music to sell us their products. Hollywood uses it to bring emotion to their movies. We use it to entertain ourselves, cheer ourselves up, or to create a mood. Music generates enormous profits for some. Super groups use it to fill huge auditoriums with wildly cheering fans. On December 31, 1994, Rod Stewart gave a concert in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil that was attended by more than three million, five-hundred thousand screaming fans.

Churches use music to move their congregations into an atmosphere of worship. My first encounter with the Lord occurred in a Baptist church during a song of invitation. I think we can agree that music is very important to us all. It is also important to God. And it is important to satan as well. Scripture suggests that Lucifer, (satan's name before he fell from heaven), (See Isaiah 14:12 MKJV), was an angel of music (See Ezekiel 28:13-15 MKJV). Because of this, I believe that he especially hates any individual who creates music that praises God. He will do whatever he can to stop this kind of music. He also expends enormous effort in promoting satanic music. Be careful what you listen to!

***

MORE MUSIC

After writing "Noah's Ark", I wrote 7 more songs between July and December of 1981. In January of 1982, I wrote "Our God Is Able". This song is of note because, on the Sunday morning when I first sang this new song at church, something extraordinary happened. Before singing that morning, I was telling the congregation about this new song I had written. When I told them that the song was titled "Our God Is Able", our pastor at Dorrisville Social Brethren Church, Reverend John Bailey, stood up and interrupted me. This was highly out of character for him, so I figured something was up. He proceeded to apologize for the interruption, but said he had something to tell the congregation. He said, and I paraphrase, "Buddy has written this song called "Our God Is Able". The title of my sermon this morning is "God Is Able"." Neither one of us knew beforehand what the other one was going to do that morning. To me, this was a sure sign that God was working through my music. The Bible tells us that God

is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or even think, according to the power that works in us (Ephesians 3:20).

#13 Our God Is Able

Our God is able to move the highest mountain. And He is able to calm the deepest sea. He holds the sun and the moon above eternally, so I know He's able to carry me. (Ch) Our God's the only one who's living and He's the only one who saves. He is our Alpha, Omega, the first and last. Our mighty defender and righteousness. (Vs) Our God is one who is altogether lovely, and He is gracious and kind as He can be. They say He's able to live throughout eternity, so I know He always will live in me. (Ch) (Vs) Our God is bigger than our imagination. And He is all that any God could ever be. You know, Muhammad and Buddha can't hear your plea. But Jesus has already set me free. (Ch)

Songs # 14-22 were not that good, except perhaps for "Because He Cared", "The Strangest Dream" and "We're Going Over". Those songs are in my songbook, if you'd like to see them.

In November of 1982 I wrote the chorus to "He Knows Your Name". Some of my songs were written in a single day, but many of them took quite a bit more time and effort. Getting the lyrics right can be difficult. Not only do you have to relate a meaningful message, but that message has to fit the melody and also rhyme! This particular song reminds us that God is watching us. He knows you and I so well that He even knows how many hairs we have on our head (Matthew 10:30). So He certainly knows our names. As a matter of fact, at 9 a.m. on the morning of Sunday, August 30th, 2020 the Lord woke me up by calling my name. He didn't call me Lyndell either, He called me Buddy. "He Knows Your Name" was written for the unsaved person. It is meant to bring them under conviction.

#23 He Knows Your Name

Friend, when the roll is called up yonder will you be prepared to stand? Or will you find that all your hopes were built on sinking sand. Well, all I know is I've been told, and I believe it's true, someday I'll walk on streets of gold. My friend, how about you? (Ch) He knows your name. Is it written down for all eternity? He knows your game, if you're not living for Him like you ought to be. He knows your name. You know He knows your name. (Vs) And are you living for the Lord according to His holy Word? To start each day, now do you pray for guidance from above? Or did you go your way today without a thought for God? Not caring or preparing for the day you'll meet the Lord? (Ch) (Vs) For soon the time will come for everyone

to look upon His face. To touch the nail scarred hands and sing of His amazing grace. But some won't be among that number standing 'round the throne. And there's a lot of people who will not be going home. (Ch)

JOHN ROBERT BAYNE

On December 13, 1982, Birdie's dad died after a long illness. He had lost his own dad when he was only 2 years old. With no dad to support the family, he was forced to quit school at the age of 13 and go to work in the spar mines. As a result, his lungs became filled with spar dust. This eventually cost him his life. John basically suffocated to death. He told me stories of close calls he had in the mines. In those days, spar was mined with a pick and shovel. John told me he stopped for lunch one day and when he went back to his work place, it had caved in! On another occasion, the mine belt he was working on malfunctioned and began spilling spar. He was trapped with no way of escape. He said, "I just stood there, waiting to be buried in spar, but for some reason, the belt shut off."

We would witness to John, telling him he needed to be saved. He resisted salvation for a long time. Then one day he told Dora, (he called her Dote). "Dote, I want to tell you something, but you have to promise to stay calm, or I won't be able to get my breath." Then he told her that he had accepted Jesus! John died soon after that. This was yet another amazing miracle from God.

John was in the hospital a long time during the last days of his life. When the time came for him to die, we were all standing around his bed. His breathing was slowly winding down. Each breath got a little further apart. When he stopped breathing altogether, Vickie, who was Birdie's sister, shook him and he took one final breath. Birdie said, "Let him go! He's suffered enough!" Then he died.

It was not until 30 years later that Vickie told us the following paraphrased story.

When daddy died, I saw an angel appear behind the head of his bed. The bed head was against the wall, but the angel was there anyway, as if the wall wasn't there. He was dressed in a red robe and had his arms stretched out toward daddy. I thought I was imagining things, so I looked away. But when I looked back, he was still there. I haven't told anyone about this for 30 years because I thought no one would believe me.

I believe this was an angel that God had sent to escort John's spirit to heaven. Isn't that wonderful?

VISITATION MINISTRY

In 1983, I felt the call to start a visitation ministry. I would go to the nursing homes and high rises and talk to people about the Lord. At that time, I had a full black beard. I told Dora about the ministry and she mentioned that I might have better luck if I shaved off the beard, because it might put some older people off. Well, I wasn't wanting to give up my beard, so I had another idea. I asked Mandi, who was 6 or 7 at the time, if she would like to go with me. I figured that would put people more at ease, and it could also be a good experience for her. She was an outgoing little girl anyway. The people really liked her. Mandi still talks occasionally about one visit where a lady introduced her to her parakeet. Mandi thought that was just awesome. In fact, she ended up getting her own Cockatiel later on. She would sometimes let it fly free inside the house. One day, she opened the front door, and her bird flew the coup. She mourned for that bird for a long time! Later on, we got a parrot.

MANDI EXCELS

Mandi was a star student at school, making almost all A's on every report card. She also scored in the top 2% of all students statewide in her SAT testing. Even before she started school, she could read well. She once stood before the church at the age of 5 and read an entire chapter from the book of Psalms. I should say here that we tried to read to her every day. Mostly, it was Birdie. Mandi would study the words on the pages as she listened. That's how she learned to read. I highly recommend that you read to your children starting at a young age. Not only do they learn, but it is a great bonding experience. Your children will love the time and attention you give them.

Mandi came home from high school one day with what I feel was a very impressive essay. This seems like the appropriate place to include it. I like it so well that I have reproduced it here:

There Was A Child Went Forth
~ By Miranda Lynn Martin ~

There was a child went forth every day, and each object she looked upon, that object she became, and that object became a part of her for that day, or for a certain part of that day, or for a year, or many years, or the rest of her life. The frilly Easter dresses and white patent leather shoes became a part of this child. The plaid button-up shirts, the Coca-Cola

sweatshirts and Guess jeans, these became a part of her. Her old yellow Winnie The Pooh, her sticker collection, her first jam box and her first CD player with the remote control. Her yellow and green bedroom with the canopy bed and her new rose and cream colored room, her first pet fish that made her cry when it died, her first dog named Pedi, a poodle, the Pomeranian named Jake that she helped pay for. These also became a part of this child. Her parents, who were protective but fair, and carrying her baby brother around the house, and later playing card with her brother, and fighting with her brother, and spending Sunday afternoons at her Candy Grandma's house, and spending Christmas at her house, and spending Easter with her other Grandma, and being bridesmaid at her uncle's wedding, and the horses at her aunt and uncle's house, and the old church in the country and the new church in town, all became part of her. Her kindergarten teacher who made being away from mommy bearable, became a part of this child. Her kindergarten shyness, the baby rug in the brightly colored classroom, and the wooden playground equipment with the twisty slide, these became a part of the child. Her best friend with the same name as her who moved away to Tennessee, and then her two best friends, and then her many friends. The television shows Sesame Street and Home Improvement, and the cheerleading and basketball and running track, all of these things also became a part of her. Her ninth birthday party at McDonalds when she got the red dress, her fifteenth birthday that she spent longing for the car keys, and the long year before her sixteenth birthday when she got the car keys. The first rose she ever got from a boy, and then her first real boyfriend who bought her a stuffed bear at Six Flags and a cockatiel named Spike, the picture from her first prom, her boyfriend's class ring, these became a part of that child who went forth every day, and who now goes, and who will always go forth every day.

Pretty cool huh? And that girl became a part of me!

Around 1982, we decided it would be a good idea to get a piano. We knew how sharp Mandi was, and so we wanted to give her the opportunity to take piano lessons. She got really good at it! Then one day she decided to quit. She just stopped playing altogether. Could I have been responsible for this? One Sunday I asked her to play a song at church. She did it, but she just didn't like performing in front of others. I told her she needed to get used to it. I had plans for the two of us to start performing together at church, but I think that scared her, and so she just quit playing. This was another example of me being overzealous. We felt it would be a bad thing to force her to perform against her will, so we didn't. Mandi may have a different take on this altogether, but looking back, this is how it seemed to me.

My hopes for us performing together didn't work out, but I continued performing and writing new songs. I numbered each song as it was written. Twelve of my songs were never finished, for various reasons, but these songs still received a number. After I wrote "He Knows Your Name", my next nine compositions ranged from being so-so, to not very good. So I had the idea to write a poem. I gave it a number, just as I did with the songs. I'm very fond of this poem, so I will reproduce it here. I hope you like it.

I Went To Cut A Tree
~ Lyndell R Martin ~

I went to cut a tree today. A strapping one I found!
A hundred-twenty feet, said, from top unto the ground.
I've come to cut a tree, I said, and raised my ax, full swing.
But looking up, I saw a bird had come to sit, and sing.

I've come to cut a tree, I said. I mustn't tarry longer.
And then I thought, twixt she and I, which one would be the stronger?
For she has been here many years, and I but just a few.
And when I'm gone, she will remain, unless I cut her through.

I've come to cut a tree, I said, and raised my ax again.
But looking down, I saw a seed had taken root, and stem.
This tree has born a child, I said. And what if it should die?
If I should cut the mother down, how will it's young survive?

Oh, how absurd, I told myself. I've some to cut a tree.
And if it's young should also die, then what is that to me?
'For I must have this wood today, to keep my children warm.
And build a home to keep them in, protected from the storm.

And so I raised my ax to cut, and felt a drop of rain.
It matters not, I told myself, and raised my ax again.
Then lightning bolted from the sky, and struck my friend, the tree.
How odd, I thought! I meant her harm. Yet she protected me.
And so I laid my ax aside, and bowed my head in shame.
Forgive me lord, I said to God. for I accept the blame.
This tree you made, so long ago, would never have to die,
were it not for the earthly needs of sinners, such a I.

You made the earth, and all within, for benefit of man.
We saw. We touched. We ate the fruit...
and then the curse began.

Not too long after writing this poem, I wrote a song titled "More Like You". The church congregation seemed to like it, and I decided to record it. I invited friends from church over to our house, and we used my Sony reel to reel player to tape it. That tape is still around somewhere. Incidentally, there is also a video recording of Birdie and me singing the song "He's Holding Up The Ladder". We recorded that one at home also. I tried a few times to get Birdie to sing specials with me in church, but she was too shy, just as Mandi was.

THE GAME IN THE HALL

This is as good a place as any to mention, "The Game In The Hall", as the kids and I used to called it. We had a rather long hallway, and one day I had the bright idea that I would kneel in the middle of the hall and challenge Mandi and Jason to get past me. It was a lot of fun and they enjoyed it immensely. I did too... until they started getting bigger! At first, they would never get past me unless I let them. Then, it got to the point that I couldn't hold them off any longer. They would both rush me at the same time and barrel over me. I decided it was time to invent a new game! We called it, "Tickle, Tickle, Whose Got The Tickle?" We would put three pieces of folded paper in a hat and each of us would draw one. Two of them were blank, but one said TICKLE! on it. When it came time to unfold the slips of paper, things would start to get tense, because whoever drew the tickle slip got tickled by the other two. It was such a simple game, but we enjoyed the heck out of it.

COMPUTERS AND THE END TIMES

Around 1984, I bought by first home computer, and I loved it! It was sold by a company called SpectraVideo. I bought a book on computer programming and learned how to write software programs. I took to it like a duck takes to water. I found I was able to write pretty sophisticated programs for that day and time. When I bought the computer, it came with an invitation card. SpectraVideo was seeking an individual who was capable of organizing and administrating a computer users group for them. I mailed them an application, and they accepted. The acronym for SpectraVideo Users Group was SUG. I utilized this acronym to come up with the name SUGgestions for the monthly users group newsletter, which I wrote and distributed to my subscribers.

SpectraVideo supplied me with a list of names of everyone who had bought one of their computers. I composed and mailed letters to every one of them, inviting them to join the group... for a fee. The internet was in its infancy at that time, and I did not have access to it, so everything

was done via the United States Postal Service. SpectraVideo also authorized me to sell upgraded versions of their computers to group members. I also sold peripherals, such as printers and external hard drives. As a result, I was able make some money doing something I loved to do. This was on top of my job at Peabody.

As I mentioned, every month I would compose and mail out a newsletter to my subscribers. The newsletters would contain suggestions on new ways for them to use their computers. I would also include with each newsletter a new software program that I had written specifically for that issue. Coming up with a new program every month turned out to be a lot of work. However, I was very pleased with some of the programs I created. One program, I called "Ledger's Edge". It was a forerunner of spreadsheet programs such as Microsoft Excel, but a lot less sophisticated. Ledger's Edge was designed to allow the user to keep track of their checking account on their computer. I will include in the appendix a sample page taken from one of these newsletters.

I prayed about having my own full-fledged home based computer business. When I calculated what the minimum start-up cost would be, it came to $666. That was a lot of money in 1984 but, more importantly, 666 is the number that represents the mark of the beast in the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation. Let me explain.

The Bible teaches that one day Christ will return in the clouds, bringing with Him the souls and spirits of all Christians who have already gone to heaven. Their earthly bodies, which are still in the grave, will then be resurrected as glorified bodies and reunited with their souls and spirits. Then, the Christians who are still alive at that time will be caught up in the air. In an instant, all of God's people will be "Raptured" from earth to heaven. This will happen, as the bible says, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. The church will be caught away. This will trigger the start of a great period of Great Tribulation. The Tribulation will last seven years. You do not want to be on the earth during the Great Tribulation.

As discussed above, the bible tells us that shortly after the Rapture of the church, there is coming a period of great distress upon all who have missed the Rapture. This seven year period is commonly referred to as the Great Tribulation. The last three and a half years of the Tribulation will be devastating. Millions will die. During this time, people will only be able to buy and sell if they have the mark of the beast on their right hand, or on their forehead. The bible puts it this way: "He, (The Anti-Christ), required everyone - small and great, rich and poor, free and slave - to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead. And no one could buy or sell anything without that mark, which was either the name of the beast or the number representing his name." (Revelations 13:16-17 NLT)

IF THE RAPTURE OCCURS DURING YOUR LIFETIME AND, GOD FORBID, YOU WERE NOT RAPTURED, DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE ACCEPT THIS MARK! Based on current technology, the mark is likely to be in the form of a tiny computer chip implanted under the skin of either your forehead or your right hand. Revelation 13:18 gives us more information, as follows: "Wisdom is needed here. Let the one with understanding solve the meaning of the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. His number is 666." Chapter 14 gives a sober warning concerning all who accept this mark. "The smoke of their torment will rise forever and ever, and they will have no relief day or night, for they have worshipped the beast and his statue and have accepted the mark of his name." This means that God's people, (those saved during the tribulation period), must endure persecution patiently, obeying His commands and maintaining their faith in Jesus." (Revelations 14:11-12 NLT). Based on this scripture, those who miss the rapture will have the opportunity to be saved during the tribulation, but you don't want to go through the tribulation.

A TERRIBLE TRAGEDY

It was around this time that I witnessed a terrible tragedy. There was a young man at our mine that I occasionally worked with. We called him Little Eddie, because he was not much more than 5 feet tall. He had a girlfriend that also worked in the mine. Her name was Faye. The two would sometimes ride to and from work together.

One very cold night in December, we had just finished working second shift. My riding buddies and I had left the mine parking lot, and we were on the mine road, headed toward Route 13. Suddenly, we saw a fellow in the road ahead running toward us. He ran up to our vehicle and yelled, "They've blown up Little Eddie!"

We immediately jumped out of our vehicle and ran the short distance around a curve in the road. When we got to the scene, the front end of Little Eddie's truck was blown up, and the windows were all blown out. Little Eddie and Faye were both still breathing, but neither of them were conscious. Little Eddie's breathing was labored, and he sounded as though he was snoring. The steering wheel was wrapped around his chest. One of my buddies pushed the steering wheel forward as much as possible, attempting to relieve some of the pressure from Little Eddies chest.

We didn't have cell phones in those days, but someone had a CB in his truck. They alerted the Old Shawneetown police, as well as the local

ambulance service. In the meantime, Faye had started to come around a little, but she still didn't know where she was. The night was so cold that I decided she needed to be moved to a warmer place. She was a short woman, but when I picked her up, she was as limp as a rag. It was all I could do to get her from the truck to our car. When the ambulance arrived, the driver was alone. Some of the guys helped him load Little Eddie into the back of the ambulance. I told the driver I would get in the back with Little Eddie and go with them to the hospital. He looked at me and said, "There's no need". I knew then that Little Eddie wasn't going to survive.

The police never found out who planted the bomb. Someone got away with murder that night. There was speculation that it could have involved drugs or jealousy, but no one was ever convicted. Faye came back to work a few months later. I talked to her a few times after that and was surprised to see that she seemed to be coping fairly well with what had happened. But a few years later, she killed herself. Like Little Eddie, we never know when our next breath may be our last, so be sure that you are ready to meet God.

UNCLE WILLIE WILSON

One evening Birdie and I were busy doing something or other... I can't remember what... when she suddenly stopped and said, "I think we need to go and see your Uncle Willie". This was highly out of character for her. Uncle Willie had been sick though, so we dropped what we were doing and went to pay a visit to him and Aunt Ollie, (Pronounced o-lee). Ollie was one of mom's sisters. Their son Bill was staying with them at the time, helping to take care of his dad. When we got there, Uncle Willie was laying in a makeshift bed in the living room. As we were talking, Bill noticed a change in his dad. He got up to check on him. Within a minute or two, Uncle Willie breathed his last. Aunt Ollie asked Birdie and me to stay with the body while she and her son went to her other two children's houses to give them the bad news. God used Birdie that day to help our family!

MORE SONGS AND A DEEP VALLEY

My next song marked the first time I wrote a song specifically for my family. It was called "Little Children", and it was written for our children, Mandi and Jason. But I still made sure that I keep a reference to God in the lyric.

#35 Little Children

Little children, run and play. God has made you another day. He gave you tiny feet to walk on. Little arms that grow so strong. So run and play. (Ch) Oh, God loves you so! Yeah, don't you know? (Vs) Little children, stop a while. Let your daddy see you smile. Tell me all about your new game. So, you've learned to spell your name? Oh, you've grown so fast! (Ch) (Vs) Little children. Oh, how precious! What a gift! How God has blessed us! Laughing eyes and winning smiles. Only ours for a little while. So run and play. (Ch)

Recalling those lyrics almost breaks my heart. I wish we could have those precious days back, even if only for a little while. Cherish your children while they are young. They will be gone before you know it.

This song had some relatively "unusual" chords in it. The Beatles often used exotic chords when composing their songs. I had noticed them in their music, but I didn't know what chords they were. So I bought a two volume set called "The Complete Beatles", which contained the sheet music to every song they had ever released. From those songs, I learned some of the "exotic" chords the Beatles used, and I figured out how to incorporate some of them in my own songs. The above song is an example. It was written using mostly C Major 7th and F Major 7th chords. These chords add flavor to the song. My composition skills were improving!

Early in 1985, I wrote song #37, "I Staked My Claim". There was a gospel group in attendance at our church the day that I sang it. They called themselves, The Harmony Five. They were in the process of recording an album, and they asked me if they could include my new song on it. Of course, I said yes. Note: Lyrics for songs 36-43 are not included in the book, but most can be found in my songbook, "The Songs Of Lyndell Ray Martin".

One day at the mines, while dressing to go underground, I overheard one of the guys say, "I don't like coming to work on this shift, because I've got the sun in my eyes." I thought to myself, that would be a good title for a song. So that week I wrote song #41, "I've Got The SON In My Eyes". That was in October of 1985. Dora loved that song.

After writing "I've Got The Son In My Eyes", my muse seemed to leave me. I only wrote three more songs in all of 1986 and 1987. I believe this happened because I had made a promise to God and failed to keep it. Never do that! I've discovered that He takes our promises very seriously. It is far better not to make a promise to God than to make one and not

keep it. My promise concerned something he had been dealing with me about for some time. I wasn't wanting to follow through with it. I needed confirmation from Him, so I picked out an obscure verse in the middle of the Old Testament and promised God that if I heard someone read that verse within the next few days, I would follow through. On the third day, I heard that exact verse being read on a gospel TV station. God had called my bluff! I followed through with my promise for a while, but then I failed Him. Sometime after that, I opened my Bible to a random page, and a verse jumped out at me. It said, in effect, "Because you have not obeyed My voice, this evil has come upon you." God never fails His children, but His children too often fail Him. I council you to obey His voice.

Of the three songs that I did write during that period, I feel that one of them turned out very well. I was visiting with dad one summer day and he told me that, while he had been mowing his lawn earlier, an idea came to him. He told me that "Pass It On" would be a good title for a song. I told him I'd try to write it. When I had finished it, I sang it for mom and dad at their kitchen table. That really pleased them. I eventually commissioned a Nashville demo of the song. I think it was the first song I'd ever written at the request of another person. "Pass It On" tells us that, if we have the love of Jesus in our hearts, we need to pass it on to others. Here is a sample of the lyrics.

#44 Pass It On

Female singer: Preacher, I wish I could preach like you and make the Gospel plain. I'd teach those folks how to meet the Lord. But I can't do one thing. *Male singer:* Well, you may not be a preacher, but on the other hand, You can pass on the love of Jesus to your fellow man. (Ch) Both: So pass it on to a neighbor. Pass it on to a friend. Pass it on to somebody who will pass it on again. Male singer: Well, you may not be a preacher. *Female singer:* Maybe you can't sing a song. *Both:* But if you've got the love of Jesus, then you can pass it on.

MANDI AND JASON INVITE JESUS INTO THEIR HEARTS

The Social Brethren churches had a good youth program. They offered Youth Camp every summer. Mandi invited her good friend, Jamie Baggett, to attend camp with her. There were fun activities during the day, and worship and praise services every evening. On one of those evenings, Mandi and Jamie accepted the Lord into their lives. I remember that even after camp week was over, they were excited about their conversion. Jamie even said that she was going to replace her secular music collection with praise and worship music. Our little girl was a Christian now, and how

happy we were! Mandi expressed the desire to be baptized. We didn't have a baptistery at the Dorrisville Social Brethren church, so we arranged for her to be baptized at the Dorrisville Baptist Church, at 1318 South Feazel Street in the southwest section of Harrisburg: (37°43'21"N 88°33'10"W)

Jason was only seven at the time, but he had been brought up in church. He saw what had happened to his sister, and he wanted to accept Jesus too. I remember very clearly the day he told me he wanted to be saved. I was driving down the road and Mandi and Jason were in the back seat. Jason said, "Dad, I want to be saved too." I didn't hesitate. I led him in the prayer of salvation right then and there. Now, both of our children were under the ark of safety! Praise God! Birdie and I told our pastor that Jason had been asked the Lord into his heart and wanted to be baptized. But the pastor told us that Jason was too young. If I had it to do over, we would have left that church and found one where all children were welcomed into God's Kingdom with open arms. I regret that we didn't.

I want to be especially careful here. The scriptures are very clear concerning children coming to Jesus. If a truth is recorded once in the Bible it is completely reliable. If it is recorded twice, it deserves particular attention. If it is recorded three times, we can be sure that God considers it to be of utmost importance. The truth I am about to relate to you is recorded three times in the Gospels. It can be found in Matthew, chapter 19, Mark, chapter 10 and Luke, chapter 18. I will use the Gospel of Mark to relate this truth to you:

One day, some parents brought their children to Jesus so He could touch and bless them. But the disciples scolded the parents, not wanting them to "bother" Jesus. When Jesus saw this happening, He was angry with His disciples. He said to them, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." Then Jesus took the children in his arms and placed His hands on their heads and blessed them (Mark 10:13-16 NLT). If your child comes to you wanting to know how to be saved, please remember these scriptures. You ought to memorize them, and their location in the Bible. Be prepared to guide your children to Jesus.

Let me relate to you a supernatural experience that later happened to Jason and his friend, Adam Smith. They were outside riding their bikes one day when Jason, for some reason, looked up into the sky. What he saw scared him half to death. There in the sky, directly over their heads, was a framed picture of a skull and crossbones. Jason told me it was clear and unmistakable. He yelled at his friend and told him to look up. Adam saw it too. They both looked at each other and then took off on their bikes as

fast as they could. They didn't stop until they reached his friend's house. Then they looked up again. The skull and crossbones had followed them! They ran inside and didn't come out for the rest of the day. Can you blame them?

The skull and crossbones would make another appearance. Quite some time after the first incident, I had been on a full fast for four days. If you aren't acquainted with fasting, this meant that I didn't eat anything for four days, while I sought God. When the four days ended I was naturally quite hungry. I decided to end the fast by taking my family out to eat. I took Birdie, Jason, Mandi and her then fiancé, Wade, to a restaurant in Marion. I was driving, and Jason was in the front passenger seat beside me. We had just arrived in the parking lot when Wade yelled from the back seat, "Look at that! A bird just messed on the windshield in front of Jason and it looks exactly like a skull and crossbones!" And it did! I quickly turned on the windshield wiper and washed it away.

Without a doubt, satan hates all of God's children. But he seemed to have a particular interest in Jason. I believe there are generational spirits. These are spirits that, if allowed, attach themselves to families and follow them down through generations... unless they are stopped. I believe it is our duty as Christians to rebuke these spirits and to stop them through the power of God's Holy Spirit. We have great power in the words we speak. I encourage you to continually speak blessings over your family. Rebuke all evil spirits, and most especially generational spirits. Speak God's word against the enemy. The Bible says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." (James 4:7)

I don't think Jason would mind me relating to you that he now has a skull and crossbones tattooed on his leg. He told us that he put it there so he can reach down and symbolically smack the devil any time he wants to. Good for you, son! Jason also has mentioned to me several times that he once had a dream wherein God blessed him in a mighty way. It reminds me of the time God blessed me in the coal mines. Thank you Jesus!

I will relate one more thing from Jason before I move on. He said he once saw aura's appear around two people. One person's aura was absolutely black, and the other's was yellow. The person with the black aura went on to do some very bad things and has had a difficult life. I won't mention his name, but I pray for him whenever he comes to mind.

**

I've mentioned several times that we should know and speak God's word. I'd like to offer some thoughts on different translations of the Bible. There

are several good translations. For shear poetic beauty, the King James Version tops my list. I've read it completely through many times.

However, the fact that the KJV was translated from the original Hebrew and Greek into Old English makes it more difficult to understand. The Modern version, (MKJV) is better. Other translations I would recommend are: The New Living Translation (NLT), The Good News Bible (GNB), the New International Version (NIV), the New American Standard version (NAS), and the Easy Reading Version (ERV). I often compare verses from these different translations. I feel this gives me a fuller understand as to what the actual meaning is. However, if I think another version has missed the intended meaning, I will always fall back on the KJV. I read the New Testament a lot more than the Old Testament. This is because the New Testament supersedes the Old Testament. The Old Testament deals with mankind's **failure** to follow God's laws, while the New Testament emphasizes God's **success** in providing salvation by grace through faith alone. One of my very favorite New Testament Bible verses is: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that (is) not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, least any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9 KJV).

Whatever versions you read, it is important to hide God's Word in your heart. During Jesus' wilderness experience, (Matthew chapter 4), satan repeatedly misquoted scripture to Jesus. Jesus would quote the correct scripture back to satan. Then, He would quote additional scripture to refute satan's false claims. Since this was Jesus' chosen defense against satan, it should also be ours.

There is a wonderful free Bible app called, "E-Sword", that you can download from the internet. The desktop version is fuller, but the smart phone app, E-Sword LT (Lite), is also wonderful. I have read scripture from that app virtually every night. Both versions allow you to download several free Bible translations. And if you want to look up a verse, you can do that with the included search features. If, for example, you want to know how many times the word love appears in the Bible, you can find out almost instantly. And the app even lists each verse and where in the Bible it appears. I'm using the app frequently while writing this book. If I know a few words from a verse I want to use, I type them in and the search will take me to the exact location. I council you to take full advantage of this free resource.

While I'm discussing free Bible resources, I recommend AWMI.net. It is a resource from Andrew Wommack ministries. There are thousands of hours of rich, free audio and video teachings to be found there. I like to watch "The Gospel Truth" TV program, which features Andrew's teachings. Another TV ministry I recommend is that of Joseph Prince. His teachings

are very Christ centered. If these programs are off the air by the time you read this, I believe you can still find them online. "YouVersion" is also a TREMENDOUS Bible App!

***

THE MUSE RETURNS

I had let the devil steal my music ministry from me but, in 1988, I rededicated myself to the Lord and music started flowing out of me again. 1988 turned out to be my most productive year as a songwriter. I started 24 new songs that year and completed 21 of them. These were songs #45 through #68. Five of them, I would have to include in my top 10 list.

It was in January of 1988 that I wrote my first song in over a year. It was appropriately titled "New Beginnings". When I sang it at church, I mentioned that I had written this new song called "New Beginnings", to begin a new year. A gentleman in the congregation stood up and said, (I paraphrase): "In the Bible, numbers have certain meanings. The number 3 represents the Triune God. The number 7 represents perfection, and the number 8 represents new beginnings. This is 1988, and you have written, 'New Beginnings'. I don't think this is a coincidence." I had not know that the number 8 represents new beginnings in the Bible. God was in this! He is always gracious, when we will allow Him to be.
Even with all these signs, there were still times when I thought to myself, "You aren't a Christian. Look at the mess you've made of your life". Satan works this way. He is a liar and the father of lies. I believe if a person is a Christian, satan will try to convince them that they aren't. And if a person isn't a Christian, he will try to convince them that they are. How does he do this? With mind games. This is another reason we must hide God's word in our hearts. Another one of my favorite scriptures... one that I fall back on often, is: "That if you will confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." This is found in Romans 9:10 (MKJV). I quoted that verse from memory just now. Then I used the e-Sword program to locate it in the Bible. I also feel led to say here that God's Holy Spirit, if He must, can and will deal very severely with us as Christians, when we have sin in our lives. His convicting Spirit can bring you to your knees!

Around this time, I was involved in the first Eagle 2 underground fatality since I had started working there. In the coal mines, we often travel on tracks that are very similar to train tracks. One day we had a huge roof collapse on a mainline track. Thankfully, no one was under it when it fell. A team of men was assigned to go in and clean it up. This involved scooping out the fallen rock, and then putting in roof supports. We installed huge 12 foot high steel arches to protect us from any further roof

collapses. I was on the cleanup job during day shift. It was dangerous work. There was "unsupported top", as we called it, 25 feet above our heads. Legally, we weren't supposed to walk out beneath unsupported top, but there was not much getting around it in a case like this. We tried to keep it to a minimum.

We made progress on day shift, then the second shift crew came in to relieve us. My brother, Butch, was working on the second shift cleanup crew with several other men. At lunchtime, the boss, who we nicknamed "Honey Child", called for a lunch break. After about 30 minutes he said, "Okay men, it's time to go back to work." My brother told me that just as Honey Child stood up, a slab of rock fell from 25 feet above and hit one of the arches. It broke in half and one half hit Honey Child in the head. He was completely addled, but not unconscious. He could hear, but could not talk. The men got him out of the mine as quickly as possible, and he was transported to the nearest hospital. Unfortunately, the swelling in his brain became so severe that he died a few days later.

Honey Child's funeral was conducted at Eldorado's Social Brethren Church. Reverend Earl Vaughn officiated. During the funeral service, Brother Vaughn told us the following story, which I will paraphrase: A few weeks ago, Darryl, (Honey Child's real name), stopped me outside after church services one Sunday morning. He was visibly shaking. He told me, "Preacher, during the invitation this morning, Jesus appeared to me in a vision, with his arms outstretched. He was looking at me, inviting me to come to him. He was beckoning me up to the altar, but I didn't go. Jesus then turned and walked away. Then He appeared a second time, with his arms outstretched to me in the same way. I still didn't go to the altar, and Jesus turned and walked away again."
Brother Vaughn asked Honey Child if he wanted to go back inside to the altar. He said he did. They went back in, and Darryl invited Jesus into his heart as Lord and Savior right then and there. It was only a few weeks after this experience that Honey Child was suddenly and unexpectedly killed. Dear reader, we don't know when our last day on earth will be. We must be ready. We have to accept Jesus while we are alive. If we die unsaved, it is too late.

Very shortly after writing "New Beginnings" in early 1988, I wrote a song titled "Blessings to name". The idea for this song came to me in a dream. My very first song came in a dream, and now my music had a new beginning with a new dream. We have so many things to be thankful for in our lives, and we need to express our thanks to God, from whom all blessings flow. I have never recorded this song, but two fellow performers and I sang it at church.

One of my friends at church once got up to sing a song about being thankful, and he jumbled up the words. He was supposed to sing, "There's food on my table and shoes on my feet." But instead he sang, "There's shoes on my table and food on my feet." Needless to say, that got a big laugh!

My next song was, "My Song Comes From You Lord". It was written to remind me that, if it were not for the God given ability, I wouldn't be able to write songs. Some fellow musicians and I sang this one at church, to a hardy applause. Warren Batts did a recording of this song for me. He is a musician friend of mine who once played with Bill Haley's Comets. He did a good job, but changed the wording and melody a little. The Comets by the way, are known for recording what many consider to be one of the first rock and roll song ever recorded... "Rock Around The Clock", in 1954. Warren also knows Bob Dylan. He once gave George Harrison a ride to the VFW in Eldorado, where George became the first Beatle to ever perform in the United States. George's sister, Louise Harrison Caldwell, had called Warren and asked if he would give them a ride to the event.

#51 My Song Comes From You Lord

I'm just a singer who sings in the choir for my Lord. If I had to pay for the privilege, I could not afford. But now I sing freely, since Jesus gave my heart a song. When I sing the hymns, I sing them for Him, for He writes the songs. (Ch) My song comes from you Lord. The words and the tune. And when I'm discouraged, I sing them for you. My song comes from you Lord, and nothing I've done. I'm only the singer, but you write the songs. (Vs) Lately discouraged by all of the sin in this land, I oft' turn to Jesus and ask Him, "Lord, help me to stand." And time after time He will hold to my trembling hand and give me a song, to sing all day long, again and again. (Ch)

The song, "What A Wonderful Life Over There", is another of my favorites, both lyrically and melodically. The chord progression was different than anything I'd ever done before. Dan Schafer did a remarkable job on the demo vocal, and his guitar work was great. As I previously mentioned, he played guitar for Shania Twain and George Jones, as well as for other prominent performers.

#53 What A Wonderful Life Over There

Think about the troubles and the sorrows of life, and then think about heaven fair. Think about the loved ones who have gone on before to that city over there. I can't wait until I see their face. Bow before the Savior.

Sing Amazing Grace. What a meeting in the air! What a wonderful life over there! (Ch) What a wonderful life we will have over there. No more sorrow and strife. No more troubles and cares. In that city built foursquare. What a wonderful life over there. (Vs) Walking through that wonderland of heavenly bliss. Drinking the water of life. There could be no better feeling than this. No more darkness of night. We'll live there together and we'll never die. All of the family and you and I. What a meeting in the air! What a wonderful life over there! (Ch) (Vs) I can hardly wait to see the city of God. Streets that are purest of gold. Walking where the saints who've gone before us have trod. Talking to prophets of old. We'll live there together forevermore. Yes, soon we'll be together on heaven's shore. What a meeting in the air! What a wonderful life over there! (Ch) (Tag) What a wonderful life over there.

TELEPHONE MINISTRY

It was around this time that I developed what I called a telephone survey ministry. I began with the "A's" in the phone book and started calling people. I introduced myself as an affiliate of a local church who was conducting a survey in the area. I had a list of multiple choice questions that I asked them. Surprisingly, most people would consent to answer my questions without much hesitation. As an example I would ask, "How many times have you read from a Bible in the past 30 days?" The choices would be: A) Daily, B) More than 10 times, C) 5 to 10 times, or D) Fewer than 5 times. Unfortunately, most would answer D. Then I would ask questions about church attendance, prayer, etc. By the time I was finished, many people were well aware that they were lacking in at least some area in their spiritual life. This was the only purpose of the survey... to get them thinking about their spiritual condition. I didn't make it to the "Z's", but I called a lot of people.

THE MUSIC CONTINUES TO FLOW

The next song I wrote was, "He Holds Tomorrow". Has it ever occurred to you that God knows the future in the same way that we know the past? Our knowledge of past events is not the CAUSE those events, just as God's knowledge of future events does not CAUSE those events. Free will is preserved. God has plans for your future. It is your decision as to whether or not you find and fulfill those plans. One thing we know for sure though... He holds tomorrow. When I saw a fellow Christian cry during the singing of this song, I knew it was powerful and had made a lasting impression.

#58 He Holds Tomorrow

I don't know what tomorrow holds before me. For I don't hold tomorrow in my hands. I only know that Jesus walks beside me, and He can move a mountain, or calm a raging river. So I'll leave my tomorrows in His hands. (Ch) He holds tomorrow. Tomorrow will be brighter. He holds the candle that lights life's weary way. He's my Redeemer, and He holds my tomorrows. He plans the future, and He planned my tomorrows yesterday. (Vs) I Don't know when my trials will be over. I don't pretend that I can understand. But if it's His desire that I face them, He helps me climb the mountains and cross the raging rivers. So I'll leave my tomorrows in His hands. (Ch)

"The Back Porch Swing" is my only Bluegrass song. It stresses the importance of telling our children about Jesus. My son Jason told me this is one of his favorites. I like it a lot too.

#59 Back Porch Swing

(Inro) The old time songs are the ones that I love. Like "Amazing Grace" and "On The Wings Of A Dove". And we'll be together "In The (Sweet) By And By". He's goanna build me "A "Cabin In The Sky". (Vs) When I was just a little one, my momma used to sing, when we'd sit together on the back porch swing. She'd sing us the song about a cabin in the sky. How we'd be together by and by. (Ch) It won't be very long and we'll be going home to a cabin in the sky. We'll get there by and by. (Vs) When mama passed away she didn't leave us anything, except all the memories of the back porch swing. But mama let us know about our cabin in the sky. Now we'll be together by and by. (Ch) It won't be very long and we'll be going home to a cabin in the sky and mama by our side. (Vs) I love my family and I'd give them anything. So we sit together on our back porch swing. I sing them the song about a cabin in the sky. Now We'll be together by and by. (Ch) It won't be very long and I'll be going home to a cabin in the sky and my family by my side. (Repeat Intro)

I was driving down the road one day when I got a strong urge to write a song. As soon as I got home, I wrote, "I'll Make A Way When There Is None". Later that afternoon, I got word that a my Mother-In-Law was in the middle of a crisis. Right away, I recorded the song on a cassette and took it to her. I told her I believed the Lord had led me to write it just for her. Much later, she told me that she had played the cassette until it was worn out.

#60 I'll Make A Way When There Is None

When there's no morning sun to greet you, when everything you had is gone, don't let your circumstance defeat you. I'll make a way when there is none. (Ch) I'll make a way when there is none. Allow the rain, then bring the sun. Don't give up till your race is won. I'll make a way when there is none. (Vs) When all your enemies surround you, when all your hope is almost gone. Don't let the things you see confound you. I'll make a way when there is none. (Ch) (Vs) When darkness seems to overtake you, when you can't find your way alone, remember, I will not forsake you. I'll make a way when there is none. (Ch)

It was in October of 1988 that I wrote "Be About The Master's Business". For me, it has to be among the top 10 of all the songs I've written. I only wish that Dan Schafer had been available to do the vocal on this recording. The vocalist did a good job, but I know Dan would have done much better. I prepared a Power Point presentation using this song, and posted it on YouTube. As of today, it's still viewable there by searching for, (including the quotes), "Be About The Master's Business". If this video doesn't set a fire under you, your wood is wet!

#64 Be About The Master's Business

Little Children in the street, searching for a bite to eat. Blind men sitting at our feet, but it is we who cannot see. Lost and dying everywhere. Empty hearts and vacant stares. They look around. There's no one there. Only Jesus seems to care. (Ch) Be about the Master's business. Be at work for Him each day. He's depending on your service, to help someone along their way. Be the Master's hand extended. Show His tender heart of care. When you're working for the Master, look around and He'll be there. (Vs) People living in the cold. Some are young and some are old. Jesus loves them. This we know. Still, our hearts are strangely cold. Look around you, chosen ones, at the work there to be done. There are battles to be won. We have only just begun. (Ch)

Of the five Christmas songs I've written, "The Christmas Lamb", is probably my personal favorite. The world has secularized Christmas. For too many, it has been reduced to Santa Claus, Christmas trees and getting gifts. Did you know that suicides actually increase during the Christmas season? Sadly, many have placed the birth and the death of Jesus Christ secondary to Santa Claus and the Easter bunny. What a terrible tragedy! But for Christians, Christmas is the day we celebrate the greatest gift of all. "For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16 KJV). That's what this song is all about. I

think it contains some of the most powerful lyrics I've ever written. These lyrics are based primarily on two of my favorite chapters in the Bible, Luke, chapters 1 and 2. We have made it a tradition in our family to read from these chapters each year at our Christmas gathering. I hope you will continue this tradition.

I have reproduced the sheet music on the following page. Maybe your church will feature it some Christmas season. I hope so.

The Christmas Lamb

© 1988
Tempo = 100

Words & Music by:
Lyndell R. Martin

1 Acoustic Piano

(Intro)

Ev- ery star was shin-ing bright. Shep-herds watched their flocks by
Now the low- ly shep-herds came to see the man- ger where He
In the East ap-peared a star. Wise men came from lands a-

night. Soon the snow would lay a- cross the land.
lay. Ma- ry pon- dered what this Child would be.
far. We have come to see the new born King.

On such a night, in Beth- le- hem, our King was born a com-mon
Would He be wise? Would He be strong? To save the world from sin and
We have frank- in-cense and myrrh. We have gold so ve- ry

man. It was the night of the Christ- mas Lamb.
wrong? It was the night of the Christ - mas Lamb.
pure. We have come to see the Christ- mas Lamb.

Oh ho- ly night! Oh, night de- vine!

The an- gels sang to shep- herd bands.

It was the night the Sav- ior came, to bring sal- va- ion's

plan. It was the night of the Christ- mas lamb.

3X

(Interlude)

**

I mentioned that Luke chapter 2 was one of my favorite chapters in the Bible. Another is Roman's chapter 8. In addition, I'd like to list some of my other favorite Bible verses. There are literally hundreds to choose from. These bring great comfort to me, and I hope they will comfort you as well.

1) Luke 2:10&11 - And the angel said to them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. (KJV)

2) John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that He gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (MKJV)

3) Psalms 145:8 - The Lord is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. (NLT)

4) Psalms 86:5 - Lord, you are so good, so ready to forgive, so full of unfailing love for all who ask for your help. (NLT)

5) John 10:10 - The thief (the devil) does not come except to steal and to kill and to destroy. I (Jesus) have come so that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. (MKJV)

6) Romans 10:9 - That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. (KJV)

7) Ephesians 2:8&9 - For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. (MKJV)

8) Psalms 119:105 - Your Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. (KJV)

9) Proverbs 3:5 - Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. (NLT)

10) Revelations 22:17 - And The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. (KJV)

11) I Corinthians 13:4-7 - Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous. It does not brag, and it is not proud. Love is not rude. It is not selfish, and it cannot be made angry easily. Love does not remember wrongs done against it. Love is never happy when others do wrong, but it is always happy with the truth. Love never gives up on people. It never stops trusting, never loses hope and never quits. (ERV) How many of these virtues can we say describe us?

12) 2 Corinthians 5:20 - Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (KJV)

13) Philippians 2:8-11 - He, (Jesus Christ), humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross. Therefore, God elevated Him to the place of highest honor and gave Him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (NLT)

14) Ephesians 2:8-9 - It is by God's grace that you have been saved through faith. It is not the result of your own efforts, but God's gift, so that no one can boast about it. (GNB).

These verses make it abundantly clear that we cannot be saved based on how well we behave. That would require perfection on our part, which is clearly not possible. Have you ever done ONE thing wrong? Then you can't be saved based on your behavior. (James 2:10) That's why Jesus had to die in our/your place. He lived a life without sin, so He was qualified to pay for OUR sins. He paid the full price with his own blood. On the cross, Jesus uttered the Greek word, "Tetelestai". This is the same word that was stamped on paid off bills during the time Jesus was on earth. It was the equivalent of stamping a bill PAID IN FULL. Jesus paid the full price for our salvation, then GAVE it to us as a free gift. Never presume you can pay for your salvation by, "Doing what you think is right." The Bible tells us that all of our righteousness is like filthy rags compared to the righteousness of God. (Isaiah 64:6) Dare we try to pay for our salvation with filthy rags? No! Accept your free gift of salvation. Don't try to earn it by living a good life. Accept Jesus as your Savior.

There are many, many more wonderful scriptures that I could share. If you don't already do it, I advise you to get a Bible and start reading in the New Testament at the Gospel of John. Don't make the same mistake I did

of starting with the Old Testament. After reading the Gospel of John, continue on thru the rest of the New Testament. Then you can go back and read the other three gospel accounts: Matthew, Mark, and Luke. There are many versions of the Bible that are free to read online. You can also download the free "YouVersion" app to your phone or computer. YouVersion has many Bible versions to choose from. Some of them will even read the Bible to you. I sometimes fall asleep at night listening to the Bible on my Bluetooth ear buds. I guess the NLT, (New Living Translation) would be my favorite, due to its understandability. The NIV (New International Version) is very good too.

A man once told me that the Bible can't be reliable because it has been retranslated so many times, down thru the ages. Don't let that idea bother you. God holds the universe together. Making sure His word is protected is not a problem for Him.

***

My first song of 1989 was, "Jesus Is Calling Again". This was my first song of invitation. It is in the tradition of "Softly and Tenderly", and is meant to be sung during an alter call.

#70 Jesus Is Calling Again

Jesus is calling you home again. Home from the valley of sin. Jesus is calling you home again. Home to the Father and Him. How many times will your heart say no? What if He calls ne'er again? Jesus is calling. The tear drops are falling and Jesus is calling again. (Ch) Jesus is calling again. Jesus is calling again. Open your heart and come home to Him. Jesus is calling again. (Vs) Jesus is calling your name again. Calling so tender and mild. Jesus is calling your name again. Will you come to Me, my child? So many miles you have gone astray, yet He will still be your friend. Jesus is calling. The teardrops are falling and Jesus is calling again. (Ch) Jesus is calling again. Jesus is calling again. Open your heart and come home to Him. Jesus is calling. The teardrops are falling, and Jesus is calling again.

The next song was, "You Can't Fool God". We all keep some things secret from others. All of us. But we can't keep any secrets whatsoever from God. He even knows how many hairs are on our heads. President Abraham Lincoln once famously said, "You can fool all of the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time. But you can't fool all of the people all of the time." I borrowed his quote for this song. Since he was a Christian, I'm sure Mr. Lincoln wouldn't mind. It's a catchy tune, with a powerful message.

#71 You Can't Fool God

I read it in the Bible, and I believe it's true. How Samson needed someone to tell his secrets to. So Samson told Delilah about his golden locks. How, if someone should cut them off, his power would be lost. But Delilah told the soldiers. She broke the golden rule. The man of God was blinded, when Sampson played the fool. (Ch) You can fool all of the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time. But one thing you'd better keep in mind. Friend, you can't fool God! And you can do anything that you want to do. Fool your friends and your neighbors to. But some day it's goanna tell on you. Friend, you can't fool God! (Vs) Ananias and Sapphira, they bought themselves some ground. They made this up between them, before they got to town. We'll tell them all a story about this land we bought. No one will be the wiser. We never will be caught. So, Ananias said to peter, "This land is all we've got. We give it to you gladly. Yes, you can have the lot." Then Peter said to Andy, "You've told a lie to God! You had a choice. You chose to lie. Now feel His chastening rod." (Ch)

I wish there were room in this book to include all of my good songs, but there are too many. That sounds a little presumptuous, I guess? But I give all of the glory to God, from whom all blessings flow. So I will leave some songs out completely. Others, I will mention only briefly. Some will be mentioned by song title only. However, keep in mind that the sheet music for almost all of the songs can be found in a large binder titled, "The Songs of Lyndell R. Martin. I hope to post many of them on Archive.org as well. Use them however you feel led.
See page 6 for search details.
Some other good songs from this period include: "By The Power of His Hand", "Some Wonderful Day", and "It's Harvest Time". None of these have been recorded to date. Perhaps I will get to record them before my time on earth comes to an end.

#75 It's Harvest Time

The tender of the land must work with weary hands, to gather in the grain before his daylight ends. There's so much work to do, till harvest time is through. No time to rest, because it's harvest time. (Ch) It's harvest time. The fields are white. The days grow short. Soon comes the night. It's harvest time. Send out the light. Don't tarry now. Soon comes the night. (Vs) Yes, harvest time is here, but the end is drawing near. There's so much work to do, before the Lord appears. It's time to leave behind, thoughts of leaving on my mind. No time to rest, because it's harvest time. (Ch) - (Inspired by John 4:35)

THE LAYOFFS

I haven't mentioned layoffs at Eagle 2 mine. We had some major layoffs through the years. These were mostly related to acid rain legislation and the high sulfur content of the coal that we mined. I will have more to say about that later in the book. It seemed that many of the layoffs would come just prior to Christmas. This made Christmas time difficult, but the Lord always provided. I have observed that when times got lean, we made do with what we had. When the money flowed more freely, we always found somewhere to spend it. I think I have mentioned this before, but about the only way to save for your future is to have money taken out of your check before you ever get it, and have it moved directly into investments. Once you lay hands on it, it always seems to get spent. This is important!

Backtracking a little, one of my first layoffs occurred in 1983. During this layoff I got a call from Peabody's Marissa mine. They were offering me a job, but it was almost a hundred miles away. Birdie and I talked it over and decided to take the offer. We had bills to pay and children to take care of. The kids were both still pretty young. Jason wasn't in school yet, and Mandi was only in 2nd grade. So we packed up and moved. Coulterville was a little community located just a few miles from the mine. We rented a place in town near the railroad tracks. Jason still talks fondly of the time we spent there, even though he was only about four at the time. We lived there for about a year, until I got called back to Eagle 2 mine. It was good to be back home! But there would be another layoff and another call from Marissa mine about 6 years later.

During another one of my layoffs from Eagle 2, I was in bad need of a car. I looked at a used car in Eldorado, and the guy offered me an amazing deal on it. I told him I'd let him know the next day. When I called him back, I asked if his offer was the best he could do. He said, yes, and that he didn't know why he had offered me the car at such a low price, because it was worth a lot more than he quoted me. I know why. God was showing me favor. I told the guy I would take the car. Incidentally, I've never bought a brand new car. It's much more economical to buy a good use car from a reputable dealer. The value of a brand new car can drop by thousands of dollars the minute you drive it off the lot. I hope you will keep this in mind when you go car shopping. Cars are usually our second biggest expenditure in life, exceeded only by the purchase of a home.

During some of my layoffs, I would begin to feel sorry for myself and for my family. But I shouldn't have. We always had enough to eat, a warm place to stay and clothes on our backs. I once heard of a man who said he felt sorry for himself because he had no shoes, until he saw a man who had no feet. Let's be thankful for what we have!

In early 1989, Birdie decided that she wanted a parrot. We had kept one for a family member for a brief period of time, and she had fallen in love with it. So we bought Max, a beautiful Amazon Red Lord. Max wasn't much of a talker. He would only say Rico, which is, I think, Richard or Ricardo in Spanish. He would draw it out... ReeeeeKooooo. One day I decided I was going to teach him how to whistle the song, Deck The Halls. I would whistle it to him over and over for days on end. He would just look at me, but never make any effort to whistle it. Finally, I gave up. I figured we just had a dumb Parrott. Then one day, out of the blue, he whistled the entire first stanza to me, perfectly in tune and not a note out of place! I was dumbfounded. After that he would occasionally whistle that tune, but only when he wanted to, but never when you wanted him to.

Jason loved to aggravate Max. Max's eyes would flash bright orange, and he would do his best to take a bite out of Jason. If you put him down in the floor and Jason was near, Max would tear out after him. It's a good thing Jason could run faster than Max, or he would probably be short a toe or two! I have some video of that somewhere. If I ever run across it, I may send it to America's Funniest Home Videos. It was hilarious to watch.

In 1989, I received my final layoff notice from Eagle 2. This time they were closing the mine for good. I was offered a job at a Peabody mine in Springfield, Illinois. We decided to drive up there and check things out. Mom and dad went along with us on that trip. A wonderful Christian rental agent up there offered us an apartment to rent... should we decide to move. When he interviewed us, he mentioned that there were some good churches in the area. Then he said, "I was watching both of you when I told you about the churches. Both of you perked up your ears. You are the kind of people we want to rent our apartments to. We would be glad to have you."

After that meeting, we checked out the mine site and then headed back to Harrisburg. On the way home, we talked things over. We asked mom and dad what they thought. Dad said, "I think you should stay in Harrisburg. We'll be able to help you better if you're down there." I think he may have been doing it for mom's sake, more than his own. We weren't really wanting to move that far anyway, and so we took dad's advice. I turned the job down.

NINETY MILES TO NOWHERE

Later, I received an offer to return to work at the Marissa mine. Birdie and I talked to the kids about it. We even went so far as to look at some houses in the Pinckneyville area. We found a nice one, right next to the golf course. But the kids were older now and both of them were well

established in school. They didn't want to move, and we understood. So we decided that I would take the job, but we wouldn't move. I would be driving to work. It was a 90 mile drive to Marissa mine... and a 90 mile drive back home. This was hard on all of us.

About a week before I was to start at Marissa, I woke up one night with my heart racing to about 200 beats per minute. I thought I was having a heart attack. Birdie loaded me up and took me to the emergency room. When you mention your heart in the emergency room, they take it very seriously. They immediately hooked me up to an EKG machine and started taking readings. The doctor read the EKG and told me that I wasn't having a heart attack. I was having a panic attack. He asked me about any recent life style changes. When I told him I was facing a 180 mile round trip commute to and from work in the near future, he was satisfied that this was what had brought on my panic attack. I had not mentally accepted what was laying ahead of me, but my subconscious mind had picked up on it and triggered a panic attack. The doctor gave me some medication to calm me down and sent me home.

I had previously taken the electrical courses and passed the State exam to earn my Illinois State Electrical Card. I was also a certified mine examiner. Marissa Mine hired me as an Electrician/Mechanic. Because of this, I would be able to work most of my shifts away from the areas where active coal mining was taking place. This meant that I wasn't subject to breathing in much coal dust.

The day I left home for my first shift at Marissa mine was awful. I vividly recall Birdie, Mandi and Jason standing in the front door with me, telling me goodbye. We all hugged and cried. Looking back, taking that job was possibly one of the worst decisions of my life. My wife and kids were effectively going to be without a husband/dad for 90% of the time for the next ten years. Mandi was 14 and Jason was 11, so they lived their teenage years without me being there for them much of the time. Birdie had to shoulder the burden of being virtually a single parent, as well as the acting head of the house. When I WAS at home, I wasn't the dad or husband I should have been. It was physically exhausting to drive 180 miles, plus work a full shift underground. Depending on which shift I was working on and the time of year, there were many days when I saw little sunlight. It was also physically exhausting for Birdie, keep house and raise two children, all while working as a bank courier.

**

By the time Marissa mine shut down in 1999, Mandi had gotten married and Jason had moved out on his own. Do you recall reading about the job I was offered in Chicago in the 70's? What if I had taken that job and lived my life in Chicago? There would be no Mandi or Jason. Or, what if Birdie

and I had decided to move to Marissa in 1990, instead of staying in Harrisburg? In all likelihood, Mandi and Jason would have met and married different spouses. In that case, you, as our descendent, would not have been born. What if Birdie and I had conceived the second son that I saw in my dream? These are huge issues to reflect on.

Take some time to think about these things. We have it in our power to change the course of history. God must get very frustrated with us when we make these life decisions without consulting Him first. But the good news is, He already knew we were going to mess things up. He already knew that we weren't going to do everything He had planned for us to do. Yet somehow, in His marvelous wisdom, He makes even our mistakes and our shortcomings work to our good. As the Bible says, "We know that all things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28 (KJV). I think the very least we can do is to pray for guidance in these life decisions. We may not hear a direct answer, but we can trust that God will intercede on our behalf.

***

There were other men from Eagle 2 that got the call to Marissa mine as well. After driving by myself for a time, I met some of them at work, and we arranged to car pool. God sent me some good riding buddies. One of them was John Ellis. He was a round, jolly little guy. One day on the way home from work, he spotted a golf cart with a for sale sign on it. He told us he was going to drive to work by himself the next day, so he could check it out and possibly buy it. On his way home that next day, he was involved in a car accident. A week or so later, we stopped and spoke with the people at the house near to where the accident had happened. The man said he and his wife were in their yard when they heard a crash. They looked up in time to see a body flying through the air. It was John. They ran out there and found him face down in a plowed field, not breathing. The man moved John's head to get his face out of the dust, but his neck had been broken. He did not survive.

John had once told me that he died on the operating table years before, during open heart surgery. He said he saw himself in a long line of people waiting to go before God's throne. However, the doctors revived him. Still, he me gave no indication that he was a Christian, even though I had witnessed to him and he knew that I was a believer. I've often wondered what John's spiritual condition was when he died in that car wreck.

**

I'm writing down events in this book as they occur to me, so please forgive me if my narrative seems to jump around occasionally. Writing ones s isn't as easy as I had envisioned it would be. At any rate, I wanted to mention here that Jason was an outstanding athlete. He was the star

player on his Little League baseball team. He was by far the best pitcher on his team, and he also was a great hitter. That is a rarity for a pitcher. I like to think that I had a little to do with his playing skills, as I would practice with him on weekends, when I was able to. One year, Jason's team was one game away from going to the state finals. I'm glad that I made a point of videotaping some of his games. Even as a youngster, Jason was also a skilled hunter, fisherman and golfer. It seemed as though anything he set his heart to do, he succeeded at. He has overcome a lot of adversity in his life, and I'm very proud of him.

***

As you might imagine, my song writing suffered during these years, due to my work schedule. But I didn't give up on writing. In 1990, I only wrote one song: "Jesus Is Risen". I did a little better in 1991, with three songs to my credit. All four were good songs, but #79, "What A Day", turned out to be a favorite of both me and my mom.

#79 What A Day

(Ch) What a day that will be, when our wonderful Savior we shall see. When He comes for you and me, what a day that will be! (Vs) I am looking for the signs of His return. And the thought just makes my heart begin to yearn, for the time when we all shall live as one, in the glory of God's holy Son. (Ch)(Vs) It will happen in the twinkling of an eye. When King Jesus comes to split that eastern sky. We'll be living where the soul shall never die. Are you listening? Will you hear the midnight cry? (Ch)

It was somewhere around this time that I was in town one day and, for some reason, had a compelling urge to go to Kroger's supermarket. When I got there, I found an elderly gentleman in distress. He was too sick to ride public transportation back home. His wife was very upset. I felt I was sent there to help them, so I loaded them up and took them home, to Eldorado. A few days later I recounted the story to my dad. When I mentioned the name of the man I had helped, dad said, "I know that man! He used to sell cars years ago. He sold one to me. I was just a young fellow and he went out of his way to help me find the right family car... one that I could afford and that would be reliable!" God had sent me to help the man who had helped my dad all those years ago! Isn't that just like the Lord?

"Lord, It's Me Again" was my 80th song. I have all my songs catalogued in a Microsoft Access database titled, "Songs by L R Martin." I've included notes with each song. Here are the notes I included for the following song: "If we come to God in true repentance, He will forgive. The Bible says, The Lord is gracious and full of compassion; slow to anger and of

great mercy (Psalms 145:8 KJV). The throne of God's grace is available to 'whoever will'."

80 Lord, It's Me Again

In times of weakness, I need your guiding hand, to lead me onward, for weak I often am. And time and time again, you let me know you understand. You hold my trembling hand and say, "Child, it's Me again" (Ch) Lord, it's me again. Sometimes I just can't win this struggle over sin. It seems so hard to bear. And so I come to you, whose hands have been pierced through. I know you understand, so Lord, It's me again. (Vs) A friend in Jesus, that's what the Good Book says. And I believe it, for Jesus is my friend. And time and time again, He lets me know He is my friend. He takes me by the hand and says Child, it's Me again. (Ch)

**

MY INVENTIONS

I worked alongside a few good inventors during the three years that I was with Sunbeam Plastics. That may have been my inspiration for developing some inventions of my own. One of them was called Medicine-Mate. They say necessity is the mother in of invention. I had a diabetic aunt who could not keep track of her many medicines, so I saw a need. Medicine-Mate was an electronic version of the pill dispensers you can buy at the drug store. It was a raised, compartmented cylinder that would beep and rotate when medicine time came. I drew up schematics and showed them to my family. They liked the idea, so I submitted it to an invention company. The company was willing to work with me on it but I never followed through, due to the expense involved in launching a new product. Expenses include: copyright searches, prototype development, production, warehousing, distribution, advertising, etc. I wasn't willing to chance that kind of investment of my time and finances, with no guarantee of a return. To this day, however, Jason still swears that he was watching TV late one evening when he saw my invention being promoted in a commercial. Did he dream this? He says no, but I've never seen the product on the market.

***

SONGS AND POEMS

In April of 1993, I wrote my one and only Praise Chorus. A Praise Chorus is basically a song that has no verses, but a repeating chorus.

#81 This Is The Day That Jesus Has Made

This is the day that Jesus had made. We will rejoice and call on His name. This is the day that Jesus has made. We magnify His name. (Repeat 3 times)

In 1993, the Fourth of July fell on a Sunday. I was torn between going to church that evening or taking the family to a fireworks display at Taylor field in Harrisburg. I finally decided to take them to see the fireworks. In the middle of the event, a huge lightning storm developed. It was like nothing I'd ever seen before, or have seen since. Great bolts of lightning filled the entire sky. It was quite a display. It seemed as if God was saying to me, "So you want to see a fireworks display? Here's one you are not going to forget." And He was right. I've never forgotten it. His fireworks display made ours look puny.

In February I wrote, "I'm Coming Home". It's a story about a prodigal son. The most famous
prodigal son is found in Luke 15:11-32. A son leaves his father's home and squanders all of his inheritance on riotous living. After he becomes penniless and is starving, he returns home. His father gladly accepts him back. This is a picture of how God gladly accepts us back when we return to Him.

83 I'm Coming Home

When I survey all of the blessings you have given, and when I think of all that you have done for me, I can't imagine how I ever could have left you. I'm coming home. This time, to stay. (Ch) I'm coming home again. I never should have left you. I never thought that I could ever sink so low. There comes a day, a child must find the way, back to the Father. Back home to stay. (Vs) When I look back on all the sorrows I have brought you, and when I think about the teardrops on your face, I can't believe I left, not saying that I love you. I'm coming home. This time, to stay. (Ch) (Tag) Back to the Father. Back home to stay.

In 1993, Birdie and I were privileged to see one of the Beatles perform live in concert. It was Paul McCartney's "New World Tour". Paul, Linda and the band performed at Bush Stadium in St. Louis. This was the same stadium where the Beatles performed almost 30 years prior, in 1966. Paul put on a great show, and we marked one more item off our bucket list.

1993 was also the year I wrote my first song based on another person's poem. Kestner Wallace approached me one Sunday evening after hearing

me sing one of my songs at Rudiment Social Brethren church. Mr. Wallace had been my fifth grade teacher. Now, he was asking me if I could set his poem to music. I agreed to give it a try. It was a poem about Wamble Mountain, which is a summit located among the Ozark foothills that lie just east of Harrisburg. The summit is about half way between Rudiment and Herod Illinois, just east of route 34. I had to adjust some of Kestner's phrasing, but I came up with a melody and developed a song. Mister Wallace liked it well enough that he took it to our local radio station, WEBQ. They played it! This was my first song to be broadcast over the air. There would be a few more later on. Wamble Mountain was my 84th song.

Songs #85-87 weren't very good. Then, in October, Mr. Wallace approached me with another poem he wanted set to music. This one was for his wife. He called it, "The Story of A Woman's Love". Honestly, it wasn't a very good poem, but the music I came up with for it was quite good. I gave Kestner his song, then set to work writing Christian lyrics for the melody. Song #88 became, "The Story of The Saviors Love". I felt the lyrics were as good as any I had written thus far, and the melody was very strong as well. The song became another one of my favorites.

#88 The Story Of The Savior's Love

I love to tell the story, about the Savior's love. It seems to be so sweet to me. A blessing from above. I cannot tell it very well. I know not words to say. I only know His love is growing sweeter every day. (Ch) Forever, through eternity, across the sands of time. The story of the Savior's love is one of love divine. (Vs) I love to tell the story, of how the Savior died. Of how he came to suffer shame for sinners, such as I. It seems to me a mystery. He was not born of man. He gave His life a sacrifice, and then He rose again. (Ch) (Vs) I know I am not worthy to tell the blessed tale, of how he died, was crucified at the end of Calvary's trail. It seems to me a mystery. I know not words to say. I only know His love is growing sweeter every day. (Ch)

I once heard someone say that "if" is the biggest two letter word in the English language. In 1994 I wrote a series of poems that I called "The If Poems". They attempt to envision what the world might be like IF things were different. I didn't set these poems to music. I will reproduce one of those poems here. The others are in Appendix B.

If Weak Was Strong

If strong was weak and weak was strong, the strong would cease to do their wrong. For strong ones then would have to do, what weaker people

told them to. Each little babe could then be born, not slain because of someone's scorn. And no small child would ever see, their parents beat them needlessly. The homeless then would have the right, to have a place to sleep at night. And hungry children in the street, would always have enough to eat. And then we would no longer see, the young mistreat the elderly. For they no longer would be told, "You have no use. You are too old." If weak was strong and strong was weak, the strong would then become the meek. And would no longer have the say. So it will be... On Judgment day. (Matthew 19:30)

I also wrote five new songs in 1994. January brought "While We Have This Time Together", which is a discourse on how every church service is unique and will never be repeated again in exactly the same way. We should cherish every service we attend and treat it as something unique.

#89 While We Have This time Together

While we have this time togehter, let us be in one accord. Let's be thankful for the goodness, and mercy of our Lord. As we share these precious moments, that will not come again, let us look upon our Brother as our friend. (Ch) While we have this time together let us stay. 'Till the cares of life grow strangely dim, and then just pass away. We are sisters, we are brothers, hand in hand with one another. While we have this time together, let us stay. (Vs) As we share this time together, let us stay in one accord. Let's be thankful for the treasure we have in Christ, our Lord. We will never be together, in just this way again. Let us smile at one another and be friends. (Ch)

I was writing some first-rate music during this time. The melody's were strong and many of the lyrics were, I feel, first-rate. As I mentioned before, writing meaningful lyrics that rhyme *and* fit the melody structure is challenging. Songwriting isn't just writing melody's. It's also writing good lyrics. Both of these are gifts from God.

"Oh, For The Love Of Jesus", (Alternately titled "Pray For Me"), is one of only a few songs I've written in three-quarter time. This means that there are 3 beats per bar of music, rather than the usual 4. The majority of songs are written in 4/4 time. Three quarter time gives the song a completely different feel.

#90 Oh, For The Love of Jesus

Oh, for the love of Jesus to live in every soul. There could be nothing sweeter than for His love to grow. Oh, that this peaceful feeling living

within my hart, could be in every brother. Then we would never part. (Ch) Pray for me. I'll pray for you. Tell the world what Christ can do. Faith in God, is the key. I'll pray for you. You pray for me. (Vs) Oh, that the light within us, would shine on every soul. We could do nothing greater, that let our love light glow. Oh, that this peaceful feeling, living within our hearts, would be in ever brother. Then we would never part. (Ch)

In February, I wrote "Good News". The word Gospel appears in the Bible 104 times (KJV) and literally means good news. The good news is that God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to pay our sin debt. The Bible says the wages of sin are death (Romans 6:23). This means that everyone who sins, (all of us), must pay for our sins with our death. That's why we all die. But since Jesus lived a sinless life, He didn't owe the debt of death. Yet He voluntarily gave up His life. He bled and died on a cross to pay for your sins and mine. Because He is the Son of God, His precious blood covers the sin debt of anyone who accepts Him as their Lord and Savior. When we trust that He died on our behalf and we surrender our lives to Him, He saves us. As Andrew Wommack is fond of saying, the Gospel is "Nearly too good to be true news"! When someone wins the lottery, they go out and share the good news with others. Being saved from our sins is far greater than winning the lottery, so we need to share the good news. This is what song #91, "Good News", is all about.

#91 Good News!

Well, one day I heard a preacher man a-preachin', and he looked right straight at me and then he said, "I have good news for you! Christ can make your heart brand new, and I'm sure that you can use good news". (Ch) Good news! Good news! He said the Gospel means good news. When I heard that happy sound, Jesus turned my heart around, and I'm telling you, that was good news! (Vs) Well, somebody right behind me started shouting. Then the fellow right beside me shouted too. And somebody way behind yelled, "It brings you peace of mind!", and I knew that I had heard good news. (Ch) Good news! Good news! I heard somebody shout, "Good News!" When I heard that happy sound, and I turned my head around, someone smiled at me and said, "Good news!". (Vs) Well, I couldn't help but join right in the shouting, and I guess that preacher man felt that way too. 'Cause he ran right out the door, yelled, "I've got to tell some more! Man, I'm telling you, I've got good news!" (Ch) Good news! Good news! I'm telling you we've got good news! With the Gospel in our hearts, now it's time to do our part, and go tell the world this good, good news! (Tag) So go tell the world the good, good news!

In July, I wrote a song for Birdie. I titled it, "There'll Never Be Another You". We are all unique creations. Even identical twins have differences.

You are unique. Of all the billions of souls who have ever lived, none of them are exactly like you. And You are created in the image of God! (Genesis 1:27)! There will never be another YOU. You are special to God. I thank God that He chose Birdie to be my life mate.

#92 There'll Never Be Another You

In all this great wide world, there'll never be another you. Your all I've ever waited for and more. And if by chance you leave this world before my time is through, in heaven there will be no other you. (Vs) If you should ever leave, my broken heart would tear into. My thoughts would scatter like the falling rain. But from your heart, you promised that you always will be true. That's why there'll never be another you. (Ch) You're voice is like the singing of the angels. Your emerald eyes, as clear as morning dew. And should ten thousand lifetimes lay before me, there still would never be another you. (Vs) In all this great wide world there'll never be another you. You gave your heart to me and only me. As long as day is light, as long as one and one make two, I know there'll never be another you. (Ch) Your love is like a breeze out on the ocean, that lets this ship of life sail free and true. You fill my every thought with true emotion. That's why there'll never be another you.

Occasionally, I would write a song while driving to work. You don't need a guitar or paper and pencil to write a song. You can just write them in your head. "A Happy Melody" was one of those. The tune came first. I don't know exactly how it happens, but sometimes a melody would just come to me. In my case, I believe it's from the Holy Spirit. But there are also plenty of songs out there that are inspired by the devil himself. I would site, as an example, some of the so called gangster rap music that has poisoned the minds of many of our youth. Anyway, I thought to myself, "That's a happy little melody." So that became my working title, and I wrote the lyrics based on that.

#93 A Happy Melody

I'd like to sing you a happy melody. I'll sing about how the Savior set me free. And if you'd like, you can sing along with me. We'll sing a song with a happy melody. (Ch) Come sing along; this happy song. I'll make it short, for it won't be very long till Jesus comes back to take His children home. Be of good cheer for it won't be very long. (Vs) Come sing along with this happy melody. Sing with a smile so that everyone will see. How very happy this whole wide world would be, if they would join in our happy melody. (Ch)

MANDI AND WADE

In 1995, Mandi meet and fell in love with Wade Franklin Ratliff. They were married at McKinley Avenue Baptist Church in Harrisburg on Friday, July 14, 1995. The wedding was videotaped. Mandi and Wade conceived two wonderful children, who you will hear about later. Wade was of modest means, so the two moved into a little rent trailer in Harrisburg. According to Wade, my dad told him that he and Mandi were going to do just fine because, If they were happy in that little trailer, it was true love. A few months later, I wrote a song to commemorate Mandi and Wade's marriage. The song title is, "We're in love". By the way, Wade later landed a lucrative job as a guard at the Illinois Youth Center, from where he later retired with a very good pension and health benefits.

Mandi had an experience with the Lord while living in that little rent trailer. She told me she woke up one morning and saw a cross in her window. Then she heard the Lord ask her, "Are you with me, Mandi?" She answered Him, "Yes Lord, I am with you!" That was the right answer!

THREE WARNINGS AND MORE GOOD SONGS

There were periods of time while working at Marissa mine when I would have to make the drive by myself. I would sometimes get so sleepy that I would have to pull over and sleep in the car. There was a church west of Sesser that I would try to reach before I pulled over. I'd pull in behind the church and sleep until the heat of the day woke me up. Then I would continue on home. One day, while driving home after a night long shift, I must have zoned out completely. When I came to myself, I looked around and didn't know where I was. The surroundings weren't at all familiar. I just kept on driving, not knowing what else to do. I ended up in DuQuoin. That was my first warning.

On another occasion, I was pulled over by the police. The officer said he had been following me for a while and that I had been driving on the wrong side of the road part of the time. When I explained my situation, he was very understanding. He asked me if I thought I could make it the rest of the way home. I was only two or three miles from home, so I told him I thought I could make it. He followed me to make sure. This was my second warning.

My final warning came one morning when I was on my way home after a midnight shift. I fell asleep at the wheel and woke up in the wrong lane of traffic. There was a car coming toward me, and the driver was in the

process of heading for a ditch, in order to avoid a hitting me. I jerked my car back into the right lane and narrowly escaped a head on collision. That was my third and final warning. When I got home I told Birdie that I was going to have to do something different. We decided I would have to rent an apartment in Marissa and stop driving 180 miles per day round trip to and from work. For the next four years, I rarely saw my family during the week. This was the lesser of two evils, but I can tell you it was not a good position for our family to be in. Birdie was a young mother trying to raise two teenagers and keep a household going. She had also made the choice to work a full time job. She was burning her candle at both ends and I was away from our family 70% of the time. I don't recommend that situation to anyone! I often wonder now how we did it, and I feel now that we made the wrong choice. Either I should have quit the mines, or we should have moved to Marissa as a family. That choice is something I now have to live with.

Maybe the only good thing that came out of my staying in Marissa was that I now had more time to spend on songwriting. I took my guitar to Marissa and used it to compose some of my best songs. One of my first compositions in Marissa turned out to be one of my favorites. I wrote, "I Talked To An Angel" there on a cold winter evening in January. It is a haunting song about a man grieving over the death of his wife. This is the only song I've ever written that includes spoken parts. The first part of each verse is sung, and the second part is spoken. Dan Schaffer did an outstanding job on the vocals. One Sunday, I sang the song for our church. While singing, I noticed an elderly gentlemen in the congregation that I had never seen before. I believe he was weeping. After the service, the gentleman approached me and thanked me for the song. He said he had just lost his wife, and my song had given him much comfort. He was a preacher. I believe his attendance at our church that day was by divine appointment. You can find the sheet music for "I Talked To An Angel" and for other songs in Appendix F, at the back of this book.

#94 I Talked To An Angel

My life was so lonely since you went away. You were still in my mind, as though yesterday. And I could not sleep for the pain that I felt. So deep in the night, by my bedside I knelt. *Spoken: And there in the darkness, an angel appeared. He came to my side and said, "Child, do not fear. For I bring glad tidings of peace and good cheer. You need not be lonely. Your loved one is near."* (Ch) I talked to an angel. I told him I miss you. I wanted to know, why you had to go, and leave me alone. He said, "Child, don't worry. Your loved one is near you. She wants you to know, she still loves you so, and she's waiting for you." (Vs) My tears fell like raindrops. They flowed down my cheeks. And I could not rise. I hardly could speak,

when there came a voice so familiar to me, that said, "I am here. You must only believe." *Spoken: My loved one was speaking, though I could not see. Yet I sensed her spirit was there next to me. The words that she spoke, I shall never forget. She said, "I am happy, so have no regrets."* (Ch) I talked to an angel. I told her I miss her. I wanted to know, why she had to go and leave me alone. She said, "Dear, don't worry. For I will be near you. And my leaving was best, for many are blessed by your faithfulness." (Tag) I talked to an angel.
In the spring of 1995, I wrote my 95th song. "The Gospel Road Still Leads Me On", is a song written for all musicians who have a traveling ministry. These are saints of God who leave their home and family for weeks and months on end, in order to spread the good news of the Gospel, by song. I once gave a copy of this song to the Blackwood Brothers when they sang at our church one Sunday evening, in 1995. I hope the song encouraged them to stand strong in the ministry the Lord had given them. As of this writing, the Blackwood Brothers have earned 8 Grammy awards and 7 Dove awards. Though none of the original brothers survive, one of their descendants, Billy Blackwood, carries on the ministry. Maybe one of my descendants will carry on my music ministry too. Maybe it will be you.

#95 The Gospel Road Still Leads Me On

Been a long, long time since we've been home, but the Gospel read still leads me on. Gotta let God's children hear our songs. 'Cause the words that we are sayin', and the music that we're playin, how they seem to bring us closer to our Lord. (Vs2) Oh, it doesn't matter what they say. Gotta hit the road just one more day. Wanna hear some sainted grandma say, that the work that we are doin' is gonna bring a glad reunion, when we meet up there come resurrection day. (Ch) Jesus loves you. Jesus loves you. Jesus loves you. Jesus loves you. (Vs) So we've gotta keep on keeping on, and we've gotta sing another song. From the signs we see it won't be long, till the Lord will be returning. Gotta keep our lamps all burning, and we're gonna keep on singing you our songs. (Ch)

In 1995, I was approaching my mid 40's. For me, it was a time of reflection. As I thought back over my life I realized that , most likely, it was more than half over. This led me to write a song called "The Passing Years". I have revised the lyrics of this song many, many times. In fact, I revised them again while reviewing the song for this book. They tell a poignant story.
I'm happy with most of the lyrics now, but not all of them. Can you improve them?

#96 The Passing Years

As I look back, I shed a tear when I recall the passing years. The photographs and the memories, are all that's left of them my dear. (Ch) I don't know where the years have gone. The time too quickly passes on. We give our dreams to the children, then turn around and they are gone. (Vs) The wind has blown the years away. Today, it took another day. The flame of life, once brightly burning, does all too quickly fade away. (Ch) I don't know where a lifetime goes. It slips away before you know. From summer sun to dark December, my morning mist, has turned to snow.

That same month, I wrote, "On Daddy's Knee." This is another song of reflection. It tells the story of a young child whose father was wise enough to pass his faith along to him. In turn, the son passes his faith along to his own children. And so goes the circle of life. As the old Carter family song asks... will the circle be unbroken?

#99 On Daddy's Knee

(Intro) Sing a song for Jesus. Sing it for your sons, sisters, brothers, daughters. Tell them every one. (Vs) When I was just a little one, on my daddy's knee, I learned about the Man who walked on the Sea of Galilee. He told me of the miracles, and of God's love for me. Now, I'm walking hand and hand with the man for Galilee. (Ch) He turned the water into wine. He caused the blind to see. Now wise men seek His favor. This man from Galilee. (Vs) Today I held my little one, on his daddy's knee. I told him all the things I know of the Man from Galilee. I told him of the miracles and of God's love for him. Now one day he will have his own son, and tell it all again. (Ch) (Tag) Sing a song for Jesus. Sing it to your sons, sisters, brothers, daughters. Yes, tell them every one.

Song number 100 was "Heavenly Highways". I took the title from a hymnal we sang from at church. It's sort of an quirky melody, but I like it. It invites the lost to join us in our journey on the heavenly highway. I will not include the lyrics here, but they are in my songbook.

Being one of only a few Marissa mine employees who had an Illinois State Electrical card, I was often called on to repair equipment that had broken down electronically. One day, in early 1996, a 300 volt DC transport vehicle had broken down, and I was dispatched to repair it. In my haste, I forgot to disengage the vehicle from its 300 volt power source. I noticed that a pair of contacts, which were supposed to be closed, were stuck in the open position. I pressed on the contact with a screw driver to see if I could dislodge it. When the contacts closed, there was an loud explosion, and a huge ball of fire engulfed my hand. It was hundreds of degrees. If I

had used my hand to close the contacts instead of using a screw driver, I might have lost my hand. As it was, I still suffered 2nd degree burns to my left hand.

I ended up in a hospital emergency room. If you've ever been burned, you know how painful it can be. It is so painful that people trapped high in burning buildings will jump, rather than burn. The ER doctor had to clean and debrief my wound. That means that he had to pull off the dead and dying skin. I guess I was in a state of prayer, because I wasn't showing any outward signs of distress as the doctor worked. The nurse looked on in amazement and asked me, "Doesn't that hurt?" I just said "yes". She shook her head but didn't say anything more. I still have signs of scarring on the back of my left hand but, thankfully, they aren't noticeable, unless I point them out. There is a scripture that says, "All things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). That turned out to be the case concerning my accident. During my recovery time back in Harrisburg, I wrote two of my best songs, back to back.

The first one was, "God Loves Mercy". The song was about exactly what the title suggest. We have a very merciful God. The Bible says that His mercies are new every morning! This is the only one of my songs that I have requested be played at my funeral. It's included on the Lyndell Martin page of Audio.com: **Go to audio.com/lyndell-martin. Be sure to include the dash between lyndell and martin.** It's also the first piece of sheet music in Appendix F.

#101 God Loves Mercy

Two thousand years have come and gone, between the cross and the throne. But the mercy of our God is still strong. It will never fade away. He's still the same. God every day. For God loves mercy and His love will never change. (Ch) God loves/has mercy for you, and if you're thirsty, it's true, you can go where living water's flow. For the God of Abraham, He holds life in His hands. Hands of mercy. For God loves mercy. If you need mercy, God will understand. (Vs) Today I walked up Calvary's hill. The sky was blue. The air was still. But the mercy of our God was so strong. It will never fade away. He's still the same. God every day. For God loves mercy, and His love will never change. (Ch)

The next song was, "Why Don't You Talk To Me?". We all have doubts that will creep in if we let the devil into our heads. This song moves from questioning God, to acknowledging that He is always there, even when we can't hear or feel Him. You need to hear the entire song to get the full impact.

#102 Why Don't You Talk To Me?

Laying here tonight, I wish I could feel your Spirit. But something just don't seem right. Why don't you talk to me? I read another chapter today, and now I lay me down to pray. But something's wrong! Why don't you talk to me? (Ch) He said, "I talked to you today, many times along the way. Remember the crippled old man? You stopped to lend a helping hand. Remember the tears that he cried? And how he thanked you with his eyes? Can't you see? That was me!" (Vs) Laying here tonight, I think I can feel your Spirit. But something still don't seem right. Why don't you walk with me. I had a lot of trouble today, and now I lay me down to pray but something's wrong. Why don't you walk with me? (Ch) He said, "I walked with you today. Every mile along the way. Remember the stranger who came, with an umbrella when it started to rain? Remember he turned and he smiled, and said, 'I'm glad I could help you my child.' Can't you see? That was me." (Vs) Laying here tonight, so glad I can feel your Spirit. So glad that you shine your light. So glad you talk to me. I read another chapter today, and now I lay me down to pray, and sing my song. So glad you talk to me. (Ch) He said, "I talk to you every day. Many times along the way. I'm here through the sun and the rain. Through the good. Through the bad. Through the pain. I'm here all the way to the end. Whenever you're in need of a friend, talk to Me. Talk to Me."

In 1996, I was driving to Marissa and back every workday, by myself. At that time, I was working day shift, which meant I didn't get home from work until after dark. One night Jason was waiting for me outside, on the sidewalk. He ran and grabbed me. The first thing he said was, "Dad, I shot a hole in the front door!" He was shaking like a leaf and scared half to death. I first had to calm him down and make sure that no one had been hurt. Then I asked him to tell me how it happened. He said he was sitting on the end of his bed cleaning his shotgun when, all of a sudden, it just went off. The gun was supposed to be empty of shells, but it wasn't. When it went off, it had been pointing out of his bedroom door and toward our front door. Birdie had only just passed by the door when the gun fired, leaving a gaping hole in our front door. Birdie said when she heard the shot, her heart sank. She feared that Jason might be hurt... or worse. She ran into his room and saw that he was okay. They both held each other and cried, relieved that neither one had been hurt.

I sat Jason down, calmed his nerves and proceeded to tell him about another little boy who once shot a hole through his front door with a rifle. "This kid was about the same age as you are when it happened." I said. So Jason asked, "Who was it dad?" I told him it was me. And that was true. One night, as a youngster, I had been spinning around in a swivel rocking

chair with dad's rifle in my hands. Dad and Butch were both there in the living room with me. For some reason I still don't understand, I was pulling on the trigger. I must have thought it wasn't loaded. Anyway, the gun went off and shot a hole right through our front door. I don't know why dad didn't kill me. I guess he was just so relieved that no one was hurt, that he let it go. I didn't have use of a gun for a while after that though, and that was fine with me! So Jason and I ended up bonding over something that could have gotten someone killed. The Lord was watching over us, that's for certain. That incident may explain why, still to this day, I'm not fond of guns or hunting.

Moving on, in May of 1996, I wrote, "Beyond The Sky". I wrote this one for my mom and dad. Dad turned 76 that year, and mom turned 74. I didn't know it at the time but dad had only 3 more years to live. As I have mentioned, he was a diabetic. In his last years, he suffered a lot with foot neuropathy. Dad used to say, "My feet feel like two chucks of ice." I now suffer with neuropathy as well but, thankfully, modern medications help me keep it under control to some extent. At any rate, this song reminded my parents that they and I will meet again someday, somewhere beyond the sky.

#103 Beyond The Sky

Someday, beyond the sky, we'll be together again, you and I. And we will learn how angels fly. We'll be together forever, you and I. (Ch) There will be no more night. No lonely days. For time no longer will stand in our way. Before you run to the sky, let me tell you goodbye. But we'll be together again, you and I. (Vs) Someday, beyond the sky, They'll be no sorrow. No tears in our eyes. There will the Son forever rise, and we'll be together forever, you and I. (Ch) (Tag) We'll be together forever, you and I.

I wrote "One Chance" in July. This song reminds us that the world has only one chance for salvation, and that one chance is Jesus Christ. If Jesus had chosen not to leave Heaven and come to Earth in the form of a human being, we could not be saved (John 1:10-14, 2 John 1:7). If He had not lived a perfect, sin free life in our place, we could not be saved (Hebrews 4:15). If He had come down from the cross, as his tormenters urged Him to do, we could not be saved (Mark 15:32). If He had called 12 legions of angles, (70,000+), to rescue Him, we could not be saved (Matthew 26:53). If he had not risen from the dead, we could not be saved (Matthew 28:6). If He had not ascended to heaven and there, once for all time, offered His own blood as atonement for our sins on heaven's altar, we could not be saved (Hebrews 9:23-28). How shall we escape is we neglect so great salvation? (Hebrews 2:3)

#104 One Chance

There was only one chance for salvation. Only once hope for all of mankind. He must die at all cost, or the world would be lost. So the Good Shepherd came for his fold. (Ch) One chance for you. Only one chance for me. Only one chance that all might go free. So He came, and He died. Took a spear through His side. For He knew what that one chance would be. (Vs) He had only on chance at perfection. Only one life to give for this world. He must die on the tree, so that I might go free. Yes, the Good Shepherd came for His fold. (Ch) (Tag) Yes, He knew there was one chance for me.

A DIFFICULT YEAR FOR JASON

Jason turned 17 in August of 1996. It was not a good year for him. One afternoon, he and a friend had left McDonalds drive-through and were headed toward Carrier Mills, on Route 45. On the big curve just South of Brookstone Estates, he reached down to retrieve his food from the floorboard. When he looked up, he was off the road and only a few yards from a huge oak tree. He was headed directly toward it. He said he had just an instant to jerk the wheel and avoid hitting the tree head on. He still hit it though, hard enough to total the Probe. Thank God, neither he nor his friend was hurt.

Also that year, Jason ran into a vehicle as he was headed south on Sloan Street in Harrisburg. Jason may have been traveling over the speed limit, but the other vehicle pulled out in front of Jason, so legally it was their fault. Again, thanks be to God, no one was injured. But both vehicles were heavily damaged. The vehicle he ran into was none other than his sister's! Wade was driving. Since both vehicles were insured by yours truly, the insurance company would only cover one of the vehicles. Mandi's Prelude got the worst end of the deal, so it was the vehicle that I chose to have the insurance company fix it Jason was driving his "new" Ford Splash truck. I paid to have it fixed. I can tell you that our insurance rates went way up after that!

Jason had so many troubles in 1996 that he was pretty far down in the dumps. The Lord was gracious, as always, and sent me a song for him, in a dream. As with most of my songs, it also has a religious connotation. I want to say again that Jason has fought the devil like a brave soldier. Like all of us, he has made his share of mistakes, but I feel that the Lord has given him a good heart. Take good care of it, Jason. Stay hooked up with the Lord!

#105 We Face The Storms Together

Often the storm clouds gather, and life can be hard to bear. But we face the storms together. You know that I'll be there. A bridge over troubled waters. A light in your darkest night. You are my sons and daughters. I'll make everything alright. (Vs 2) Until your storm is over, until the rain is through, you can lean on my shoulder. I will be here for you. Think of me when you're lonely. Call on me when you're blue. Trust in my Spirit only. I will be here for you. (Ch) I'll take your hand. I'll understand. My arms are open wide. Believe in me, and you will see, that I'll be by your side. And everything's alright. (Vs) Remember the things I tell you, are things that you need to know. I'd never want to hurt you. Not when I love you so. Follow the things I tell you. I'll show you the way to go. I only want to teach you, things that which will help you grow. (Ch) I'll hold your hand. I'll understand. My arms are open wide. Believe in me, and you will see, that I AM by your side, and everything's all right.

CANCUN, MEXICO

In 1996 we went to Cancun Mexico with Mandi and Wade. WE took Jason and Wade's brother, Mick along with us. We all had a great time. The turquoise waters there are the most beautiful I've ever seen. There were a couple of incidents there that I especially remember. We were walking down the street and saw a little girl, (I'd estimate her to be about five years old), was standing on a corner, apparently alone. She was selling little knitted arm bracelets. I'm sure a parent was nearby, but they were well hidden. She looked so cute and helpless, there was no way I was not going to buy from her. I took the bracelet home and attached it to my guitar as a reminder of how poor many of the Mexican people are. In another incident, Mandi and Wade were coming out of the Cancun Hard Rock Cafe with a box containing some pizza that they hadn't finished while inside. A little girl came up to them with her arms stretched out and said, "For me"? Of course, they gave her there pizza.

JADE RAVEN RATLIFF

In 1997, Mandi and Wade presented us with our first grandchild. Jade Raven Ratliff was born Friday, May 2nd, 1997. What a special little girl! I was underground at Marissa mine when I got a call to come out of the mines. Our daughter was in labor! I got to the hospital as quickly as I could. As it turned out, I had plenty of time, because Mandi's labor was not progressing well. Finally, the doctor said that he needed to do a c-section to prevent any more stress on mother and child. That went smoothly, and Jade was delivered. We have a priceless picture of Wade

carrying her out from the delivery room. I hope to find it and include it in the appendix. His smile could not have been bigger!

The following month I wrote what I consider to be one of my most melodic choruses. "Christmas Isn't Christmas Without You", was one of my first seculars songs, but I made sure to include a religious reference in the lyrics. I've done this with almost every song I've ever written. If I were to re-record the demo, I would make some small tweaks to the melody, in the verses. These slight changes are reflected in the most current sheet music. This is a song about a New York City couple that had parted ways. The man was heartbroken. Wanting to reminisce, he took a walk down 42nd street, in heavy snow. He soon began praying that the Lord would send his lost love back to him. And He did!

#109 Christmas Isn't Christmas Without You

I took a downtown train to 42nd street. Snow was falling and the wind was strong. I walked among the shops and hoped I'd find you there. Christmas isn't Christmas since you've gone. (Ch1) All along the avenue, searching for a sign of you. Things I see remind me of things we used to do. Something old and something new. Something borrowed. Something blue. Christmas isn't Christmas without you. (Vs) I took a walk down past our favorite restaurant and asked a marching band to play our song. Someone wished me, "Have a Merry Christmas time." I told them, "It's not Christmas since you've gone." (Ch1) (Vs) I found the park bench where I fell in love with you, and asked the Lord to send you back to me. Like an angel in the snow, I saw you standing there. Heaven sent a miracle to me. (Ch2) All along the Avenue, holding hands and loving you. Things we see remind us of vows to be renewed. Something old and something new. Something borrowed. Something blue. Once again it's Christmas. I'm with you. And so, on Christmas day, I'll marry you!

That same month, I felt compelled to write a song for our new grandbaby, Jade.

#111 Jade's Song

(Intro) It's almost midnight. May God watch over you, and may he bring sweet dreams to you. (Vs) Good night my sweetheart. Dream pleasant dreams. Don't wake till morning. Let mommy sleep. It's almost midnight. The stars are bright above, and you are with the ones you love. (Ch) Swing on the stars above. Dream of the things you love. Sleep tight don't you worry. Jade I love you. (Vs) And in the morning, when day is new, your

loving daddy, will comfort you. But now it's midnight. May God watch over you, and may He bring sweet dreams to you. (Ch)

THE MUSIC STOPS

After I wrote Jade's song, the new music stopped completely. This time, it was for two years. Dora told me that I had let the devil steal my music ministry, and I believe she was partially right. Birdie stopped going to church, and the kids stopped going shortly after that. Then I stopped going too. It's easy to blame things on our work situation, but I should never have let this happen. It was a dark period for me, spiritually speaking. My prayer life dwindled and I went through a period of depression and deep conviction. I was a miserable person. God has spoken to me directly only on very rare occasions, but He spoke to me during this period. He said, "I do not blot him out." (Revelation 3:5) We have a very merciful God!

Thankfully, the muse would eventually return, and I would write some more very good songs over the following years... probably some of my best. But the songs did not come nearly as often as before. I shudder to think of the songs that I could have written during that two year drought period. I was not one to just sit down and try to come up with a song. This happened only very rarely, as with Jade's song. Most of my songs came from my life experience. The idea for a song would normally just seem to be dropped into my soul, or I would have a dream. At any rate, the ideas were now coming less frequently, but the ability to write good lyrics and melodies had not left me. As the Bible says, God's gifts and His call can never be withdrawn, (Romans 11:49 NLT). But we *can* fail to use them, for whatever reason. We should treat whatever gifts God chooses to give us very seriously. I we don't use them, they will tend to fade away.

1999 - A YEAR OF HUGE CHANGE

1999 was a year of huge change for the Martin family. For starters, it marked our 25th wedding anniversary. Neither Birdie nor I had ever been outside of the United States, so we decided to take a trip to Antigua. This tropical island in the Caribbean Sea is a paradise, as long as your don't stray too far from its coast. The flight down went well, but the taxi that took us from the Antigua airport to our hotel looked like it might not make it a half mile down the road. Things got worse at the hotel. When we walked into our room, the first thing we saw was a huge Iguana hanging on the wall. Birdie flipped out, and I couldn't blame her. We went to the lobby and demanded another room. The manager said they didn't have

any more rooms and that the Iguana wouldn't hurt us anyway! We stood our ground and camped out in the lobby until something was done. Finally, the manager said he found another room. This room turned out to be shabby, with decades old plumbing and a terrible bed. The only air conditioner was a window unit that sounded like it was on its last legs. We made the best of it though, and enjoyed the beautiful beach. The food at the hotel looked good, but it had little taste. One day, we dined on M&M's and Cokes from a local store.

One evening, we took a taxi to Shirley Heights, which is an enchanting summit that overlooks Eric Clapton's Crossroads drug rehabilitation center. He had opened it in 1998 to help recovering addicts. On the road to Shirley Heights we saw as sign that said, "Rain Forest ahead". As soon as we entered the rain forest, it was raining. As soon as we passed through the forest, the rain stopped. The ambiance of Shirley Heights was very Caribbean, and so were the music and festivities.

The trip through the interior taught us that Antigua is a very poor nation. As soon as we left the resort area and went inland, open sewage became apparent. The houses consisted of what we Americans would call shacks. Those poor people couldn't even afford to fence in their cattle. If they did have a cow, it would be tied to a movable stake. All of this gave Birdie and I a much greater appreciation for what we have in America.

While in Antigua, we also went on a tour of Bird Island. The guides were speaking to one another in a language that I could not understand. I asked one of them what language they were speaking. He laughed and said they were speaking their version of English. You could have fooled me! On the Island summit, if you looked west, the ocean was deep blue. If you looked east, it was a beautiful turquoise. The guides pointed this out and said the blue was the Atlantic Ocean, and the turquoise was the Caribbean. Incidentally, Antigua is only 30 miles from the island of Montserrat. There was a massive volcanic eruption there in 1995, and we could still see smoke and ash rising from the crater, four years later.

Two months after our return from Antigua, on June 9th, 1999, my dad died at the age of 79 years and 5 days. Several of the family had visited with mom and dad the previous week, in honor of dads birthday. I took some video that day, and those are the last images we have of dad before he died.

Dad had often said that he had ask God to let him die working. That's what happened. It was a very hot day in June, and dad had gone out to their pole barn to do some work on his tractor. When he hadn't come back inside after quite a while, mom went looking for him. She went into the pole barn and looked around, but didn't see him. Later on, she went

looking for him again. He had collapsed from a heart attack and was laying next to the pole barn wall, in a dimly lit area. Mom had missed him the first time.

When I arrived on the scene, the ambulance had just gotten there. Dad had clearly been gone for some time. I remember putting my arms around Mandi and Jason. We walked toward the woods a little way. Mandi said, "We should put a picture of all of us in the casket with grandpa." That was when I lost it. I broke down and cried. I remember telling the kids, "This is going to be hard." It surely was. We lost a mighty fine man that day, but Heaven gained one!

By 1999, I had been working at Marissa mine for nearly 10 years. About half of that time, I drove alone or car pooled the 180 miles back and forth to work. The last 5 years, I stayed in an apartment in Marissa during the week and came home on the weekends. I've already mentioned how hard this was on our family. I had told others that the job paid too well for me to quit, but that I wouldn't be too upset if the mine closed. In 1999, it did. I was 49.

Fortunately, the United Mine Workers of America had negotiated specific benefits for miners who lost their jobs due to Acid Rain legislation. Since our mine closed because of Peabody's inability to market their high sulfur coal, we qualified. This meant that Peabody would pay the tuition for 2 years of college for any miner who wanted to go. A stipend was included for us to live on, as long as we were going to college. Also, anyone with 20 years or more in the mines could take an early pension. For me, this was too good a deal to pass up.

I chose to attend Southeastern Illinois College, where I would be working toward an Associate of Science degree in Computer Information Technology. I had graduated once before from SIC, and also from SIU, but those degrees were both outdated. I am happy to say that I got my Associates degree in Applied Science and graduated near the top of my class. I now had 6 year of college on my resume. I was offered a job at Rend Lake College, installing computer systems. The catch was that this would be another long drive to work, so I turned it down. However, I found other rewarding work. I will tell you about that later in the book.

Another big event of 1999 was Jason's marriage to Amanda Gail Nolen. Jason and Amanda meet at Harrisburg's Ponderosa Steak house, where they both worked. After marrying, they rented a nice home in Carrier Mills. I had moved back home at about the same time that Jason moved out. That was a good thing, because I don't think Birdie would have done too well living alone.

The final big event of 1999 was horses. At a young age, Mandi developed a love for horses. Birdie's sister Vickie and our brother-in-law, Kenny owned horses. When we would visit them, Kenny would sometimes take his daughter Crystal, and Mandi, for horseback rides. Mandi would have dreams about owning her own horse. When she was about 10 years old, we bought her one. His name was Ben. Mandi loved that horse! One day, Crystal offered to take Mandi riding. They loaded their horses into Kenny's horse trailer and headed out. When they arrived at the trail, they discovered that one of the boards in the trailer had broken through. Ben's leg had been dragging along the road for no telling how long! The leg was damaged almost beyond repair. The vet did the best he could, but Ben was never the same after that.

Mandi maintained her love for horses into adulthood. She and Wade ended up buying some horses in 1999, shortly after dad passed away. Mom let them fence in a couple of acres of her land for pasture. They eventually got involved with a local horseman name Larry Oxford, who owned and bred horses. Mandi and Wade asked Birdie and I if we would be interested in going into the horse racing business with them. We thought it would be a good bonding experience, so we said yes. The four of us bought a horse trailer together and started looking for a good horse.

You may have heard of Seattle Slew. He won the Triple Crown of horse racing in 1977. The Triple Crown is horse racing's equivalent to winning the World Series or the Super Bowl. As of this writing, in all of history, only 13 horses have been Triple Crown winners. Larry Oxford owned a stallion who was sired by Seattle Slew. His name was Cat's Creek Slew. He was a magnificent, well muscled animal. We bread our horse, Riffle, to Cat's Creek and got a beautiful mare. We registered her under the name of Won Indian Riffle. Regrettably, she injured her leg pretty badly in a fencing accident and so we never did enter her in a race. We were not having good luck with horses!

We did however, make another, more successful purchase. Mandi, Wade, Birdie and I pooled our resources and bought Jade a beautiful Haflinger. Trigger has been the horse of a lifetime for Jade. As of this writing in 2023, she still owns him. Her 4 year old daughter, Briar, also rides him now. Unfortunately, Trigger developed cancer a few years ago in his left eye, and it had to be removed. He is currently undergoing treatment for the same problem in his right eye.

Baleigh Danielle Martin Is Born

In 2000, Jason and Amanda presented us with our second grandchild. Baleigh Danielle Martin was born on Wednesday, May 17th. What a

special little girl! Her middle name is taken from Jason's middle name, Daniel. Baleigh would go on to graduate Summa Cum Laude from Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville and work with helping underprivileged children and children from broken homes. Of course, I had to write her a song. I called it "Beautiful Baleigh". This was the first song I had written in two years, and it was difficult to write, simply because I had not written in so long. If we don't use what God gives us, we can lose it!

#112 Beautiful Baleigh

Beautiful Baleigh! Have you seen the light in her bright eyes? Beautiful Baleigh! They shine like a diamond in the sky. I love you Baleigh. I'm happy when you are by my side. (Ch) And when were together, I feel free. Free as a bird out on the sea. This is the way life's meant to be. So let's take a walk, just you and me. I love you so! (Vs) Beautiful Baleigh! How I love to see your smiling face. Wonderful Baleigh! So lovely in crinoline and lace. Baleigh, I love you! No one could ever take your place. (Ch)

TRISTAN GAGE RATLIFF IS BORN

On Wednesday, May 16th, 2001, Mandi gave birth to our first grandson, Tristan Gage Ratliff. What a special little boy! He was born just one day short of Baleigh's first birthday. We would end up with six grandchildren; three grandsons and three granddaughters. All of the girls got a song out of me, but none of the boys did. But that doesn't means I favored the girls over the boys. Guys just don't usually write songs for guys! Tristan is currently making preparations for a career in the Marines. He anticipates being stationed in California. We wish him all the best!

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

In 2001, I was still attending classes at SIC and working toward my Associate of Science degree in Information Technology. On Tuesday, September 11th, I got a call from Mandi, asking if we had our TV on. I told her no, and she told me to turn it on. When I did, the scene was absolute chaos in New York City. Terrorists had hijacked two large commercial airliners and flown them into the World Trade Center buildings, commonly known as the Twin Towers, in Lower Manhattan. Other terrorists flew another plane into the Pentagon. Yet another airliner would have taken out the White House in Washington D.C., had not brave men on board that aircraft fought off the terrorists. Everyone on board rode the plane to the ground before it reached Washington. In fact, everyone on board all

four airliners would perish. In total, 17 terrorists murdered 2,997 victims on that day. Thousands more were maimed or injured. There were tragic scenes of people jumping to their death from both towers. Since that day, more than 2000 additional deaths have been attributed to 911 illnesses, such as breathing disorders and even cancer. Osama Bin Laden was discovered to be the master mind of these attacks. He eluded capture until May 2nd, 2011, when he was hunted down and shot to death by American soldiers.

MY NEW CAREER

When I graduated the second time from SIC in May of 2002, I started looking for a job. An acquaintance of mine suggested that I would make a good teacher, and that there was a job opening at SIC for a General Educational Development Instructor, (GED). I applied for the job and was hired immediately. I would be teaching young people who had dropped out of High School. I would be preparing them to take a state exam that, should they pass it, would be equivalent to a High School diploma. The instruction book was over 4 inched thick. It covered Math, English, History, Language and Writing. I taught some classes on campus at SIC, but I also taught in Hardin and Pope counties. I realized that I had a knack for teaching, and I enjoyed it. I also did some substitute teaching for Harrisburg Unit 3 school district from time to time. This included teaching classes at East Side School, the Middle School and Harrisburg High School.

SIC also hired me to teach a computer class for Harrisburg's Anna Bixby Center, which was a shelter for battered women. Then they asked me to teach an Information Technology class at Golconda Job Corps. That was quite an experience! I recall stepping out of the I.T. classroom briefly one day to retrieve some papers. When I returned, two of the young men were down in the floor, flailing away at each other. They were both big fellows. I called for help from a teacher in an adjoining room, and we got them separated. I was ready to change jobs by this time.

SIC then asked me to teach a course in electronics at the Dixon Springs Boot Camp. These were young men, mostly from Chicago, who were one step away from State Prison. Surprisingly, those kids seemed to like me... except for one. I ate my lunch in the same cafeteria with the inmates. One day I was standing beside the garbage can where the students emptied their food trays. One of the inmates slammed his tray against the garbage can in an effort to cover me with food. Thankfully, he missed. I finished out that semester, but I didn't return for the next one. I got a call from that same Youth Camp about a year later, asking if I would consider taking the job back, full time. NO!

**

Digital cameras were the new craze in 2002, so we bought one. The pictures they took were amazing. I put the camera to good use, taking lots of pictures of our grandkids. We had them over fairly often in those days. Jumping ahead just a little, I remember a couple of quite humorous events that occurred with Jade and Baleigh. Birdie was in the shower one day and had left the bathroom door unlocked. Baleigh blundered in, and Birdie said to her, "DO YOU MIND?" Baleigh promptly answered, "SOMETIMES!" On another occasion, Birdie was once again in the shower when Jade blundered in. Again Birdie asked, "DO YOU MIND?" Jade's answer was every bit as hilarious as Baleigh's had been. Jade answered, "NOT VERY WELL!" Hilarious! The grandkids would often put on skits for us. They would dress up and dance and sing. Or they would act out little plays they had made up. We made some great videos from those skits.

***

In 2002, the guy who Jason and Amanda had been renting from wanted to move back into the house he had been renting to them. So they needed a place to stay. They asked if they could live with us until they could find something else. Of course, we said yes. It was around this time that they started having marital problems that eventually ended in a divorce. This was a very difficult time for all of us, but especially for Baleigh. Baleigh ended up living the rest of her childhood with Amanda's step mom, Claudia, and Claudia's new husband, Kyle. I would like to say that it was wonderful of them to take her in, and they treated her as though she was their own. Birdie and I also kept her a lot during those years. Divorce is a terrible thing, and my prayer is that your family will never be affected by it.

After Jason's divorce, I wrote "Behold The Sparrow". The idea for the song came from the Bible, (Matthew 10:29-31). If God is aware of and cares about every sparrow that falls from the sky, then He surely cares about you and I. God was well aware of the pain we all felt when Jason and Amanda divorced, and He was there in our midst. Although I have never recorded this song, I think it's very melodic, with a touching message. Maybe you could have someone you know who plays piano to play it for you. I will include the sheet music for it in the appendix. Many of my songs have never been recorded with lyrics. I hope to place instrumental versions of many of those songs on the website, Audio.com. **They can be found there by going to audio.com/lyndell-martin. Be sure to include the dash (-) between lyndell and martin.**

#113 Behold The Sparrow

When your back's against the wall, and your troubles are mountain tall, and you're sinking 'neith the weight of them all, look above. Behold the sparrow. God knows when it falls. And He knows when you're are troubled, and He hears when you call. (Ch) Behold the sparrow, God knows when it falls. Should you be troubled, He hears when you call. Oh, don't forget to look above, for reaching down with arms of love, the grace of God will see you safe through it all. (Vs) When you're lost, and all alone, and you question where God has gone, and you wonder, "Am I on my own?" Lift your eyes. Behold the sparrow. God know when it falls, and He is there above the shadows. Just awaiting your call. (Ch)

COLORADO CALLS

In August of 2003, Birdie and I went camping in the Colorado mountains with Mandi, Wade and Jade. The mountains of Colorado are a sight to behold! I'm reminded of Psalms 121:1-2. "I will lift up my eyes to the hills. Where shall my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth." (KJV) We camped on the Blue River, about seven miles north of Silverthorne. The coordinates are (39°43'33"N 106°07'49"W). It was there that Jade invented the work "Chickenmunks", when some chipmunks came to us begging for food. They ate right out of her hands! Some other highlights of that trip included: Mount Evans, which has the highest paved road in North America, altitude 14,130 feet (39°35'17"N 105°38'37"W), Cataract Falls, (39°49'58"N 106°19'18"W), Breckenridge Ski Resort (39°30'04"N 106°02'35"W) and Vail (39°38'00"N 106°21'25"W). The houses in Vail were so expensive, we felt like we should pay someone just for the privilege of looking at them. We sort of felt looked down on in some of the shops. Maybe we weren't dressed well enough to fit the circumstance. Incidentally, I used a picture from Silverthorne as the cover for my first album, "I Talked To An Angel". That picture was taken from the Silverthorne Recreation Center (39°38'02"N 106°04'19"W).

In November I wrote, "Christmas Is A Magic Time Of Year". I feel that it's a very good Christmas song. It's included in the appendix.

#114 Christmas Is A Magic Time Of Year

Jingle bells are jingling. Yule tide carols, ours to sing. Christmas is a magic time of year. Shopping with the family. Soon we'll find the perfect tree. Christmas is a magic time of year. (Ch) Set a date. Don't be late! Decorate the tree. Lights and silver bells. Mistletoe in the snow means a kiss for me. Drop a penny in the wishing well. Peace on earth, good will and all is well. (Vs) Horses neighing in the stall, give the grandest ride of all.

Christmas is a magic time of year. Hitch the sleigh and off we go, jingle jangle through the snow. Christmas is a magic time of year. (CH) Giddy-up, Giddy-up, Giddy-up lets go, for a sleigh bell ride. Hurry up, Hurry up, Dobbin don't be slow. All God's children love to take a ride. Come on children, let's all take a ride! (Interlude & Key change) (Vs) Gather round a crackling fire, while the snow piles higher and higher. Christmas is a magic time of year. Practice for the Christmas play. Watch for Santa and his sleigh. Christmas is that perfect time of year. (Ch) Come along, come along, to the Christmas play. Loved ones will be near. Sing along with the songs. This is Christmas day. Harts are filled with laughter and good cheer. Christmas is a magic time of year. Christmas is that magic time of year.

A BIG MOVE

One Sunday shortly before dad passed away, Birdie and I were at mom and dad's house on one of our regular visits. As we were leaving, I looked out over their pastureland, pointed to an area northwest of the house, and said to Birdie, "That would be a good place to put a house", and she agreed. We sort of put the idea on the back burner for a while. But soon, we began to notice mom's health was declining. Sooner or later, she would not be able to look after the place by herself.

By 2003, our property taxes at Barrett Lane had risen to over $2000 a year, which was a princely sum in those days. I approached mom about buying an acre of land from her and moving out near her. Then we would be better able to help take care of her, and our property taxes would plummet. She liked the idea, so we put our house at 140 Barrett Lane up for sale. We sold the house quickly, acting as our own realtors. We hired an attorney to do the necessary paperwork and saved ourselves the 6% commission that a realtor would have charged us, (about $5,500). The lawyer's fees were around a thousand dollars, so we came out about $4,500 ahead of the game. If you ever sell a house, I recommend that you consider doing the same. Our property taxes went from over $2000 to less than $200 a year. Plus, mom would now have someone near her, to better help with her everyday needs. As you will find out later, this turned out to be a blessing. We bought our new manufactured home on November 17th, 2004 but didn't take delivery until January of 2005. It has been a wonderful place to live, and we are still enjoying it as I sit now, almost 20 years later, writing my memoir.

At that time, I was once again substitute teaching for various schools in the Unit 3 school district. There happened to be a student at East Side elementary school that was in need of an EOC aid (Extra Ordinary Care), and the school principal asked me if I would be interested in the job. Since

it would be a fulltime position, and I would know each day where I would be working, I accepted the offer. The student turned out to be quite a hand full, but I was able to help him pass into the next grade that year.

The following year, I was placed with a Filipino student who had difficulties getting along with some of the other students. He wasn't the problem, they were. He was a little fellow, and some of the students tended to pick on him because he was small, and because he was "different". You may recall an observation I made near the beginning of this book: It is vitally important to prevent bullying in school. I remember well the first day that I supervised AJ (his initials). During recess, he was standing at the top of a piece of playground equipment. Two boys approached and started calling him names and taunting him. This took my mind back to the days when I was a student myself and had to endure abuse from my own tormentors. So, I was in full sympathy with AJ when he lost his temper and, in a rage, jumped to the ground in full attack mode. Of course, the two troublemakers were twice his size, but that didn't seem to matter to little AJ. Well, I immediately jumped in between those boys. I stopped my student, calmed him down a little, and then had a talk with the other two boys. I told them that from now on, if they harassed my student, they were harassing me. Word got around, and no one bothered AJ after that.

You may recall my telling you about the hunting accident of Jim Morris, a coworker of mine from Eagle 2 mine. I will now bring the Jim Morris story full circle. In 2005, my general practitioner was a Physician's Assistant (PA) by the name of Curt Morris. He was a fine young Christian man. During my office visits with him, our conversation would often turn to religion. One day I mentioned that I used to work with a gentleman by the name of Jim Morris. I asked Curt if he and Jim were related. He told me that Jim was his dad. One thing led to another, and I think I must have mentioned Jim's hunting accident. When I asked Curt how Jim was doing, he told me that his dad had passed away a few years ago due to complications arising from his hunting accident. Then Curt proceeded to tell me the following true story,(paraphrased).

It had been a couple of years since dad had died. A friend and I were deer hunting. My friend shot a deer, and I helped him drag it to his truck. When he left, I walked back into the woods and up a hill. I saw a tree that had fallen. It looked like a pretty good hunting spot, so I decided to stop there and try my luck. I sat down and leaned against the tree stump. The fallen tree was to my left. I had been there only a short time, when I suddenly began to have the feeling that I was in danger. I tried to brush it off, but the feeling kept getting stronger. For some reason, I looked to my left, where the fallen tree was laying. There stood my dad. He didn't say anything to me. He just pointed at me, then pointed toward where I had

left my truck. Then he was gone. I got out of there immediately! To this day, I still don't know what the danger was, but I do know that God sent dad that day to warn me to leave!

KEENAN DANIEL MARTIN IS BORN

Jason eventually met and married Melinda Murphy. From their union came our second grandson, Keenan Daniel Martin. He was born July 27th, 2005, at Carbondale Memorial Hospital. What a special little boy! His middle name is the same as his dad's. Keenan was born on my mom's birthday, making his arrival even more special. At this writing, Keenan is attending his final year of high school, plus working a part time job. He has told me that he wants to follow in the footsteps of his dad, myself and my dad, by becoming a coal miner. I have tried to discourage him from this because, as you know, working beneath the ground can be a dangerous occupation.

MY BIBLE PROJECT

My job as an EOC Aid left me with a lot of free time during class periods. While the teachers were teaching, I often had only to sit and observe. I would only intervene if a teacher requested me to do so, or if the student needed special assistance from me. Beginning in 2006, I decided I should put all of this free time to good use. I started putting into words my understanding of the New Testament. This was a huge undertaking. It took me years to complete.

Starting with the Gospel of Matthew, I read each verse in the New Testament and then restated it in my own words. (I actually also worked some in the Old Testament, but only the first 20 chapters of the Book of Genesis.)

I would do most of the work in longhand, then take the notes home and type them up. I went to great lengths to stress that this work was only my interpretation of how I perceived the scriptures. It is in no way a retranslation. The reader is instructed to use the Bible itself as the final authority. The entire work consists of over a quarter of a million words, on 340 pages. I incorporated internal hyperlinks to assist the reader in maneuvering through the various sections. Last year, I published the book on the Archive.org website, under the title "Bible Study Notes Of Lyndell R Martin". You will also find other items there. For your convenience, I have repeated below the instructions on how to access them:

1. Go to the website Archive.org
2. Ignore the "Wayback Machine" search box, if the website still features it.
3. Find the other search box and click inside. (You may have to scroll down to find it.)
4. Select "search metadata" below the search box, if It's not already selected.
5. In the search box, type **LYNDELLMARTIN@YAHOO.COM** and hit enter.
6. All my files should appear. Find the one you want and click on it.

In August of 2006, I wrote what I consider to be one of my best songs. I feel that both the lyrics and the melody are exceptional. The inspiration for "The Blue Hills Of Heaven" came from a picture I saw online. It was a photograph of hills that had a beautiful blue hue to them. There is so much to admire about God's creation. So many wonderful colors, sounds, textures, tastes, and on and on. I suppose God could have given us a black and white world, with only mush to eat. But He is a God of immense variety. We must be careful to worship only The Creator... not His creation.

#115 The Blue Hills of Heaven

Oh, I often think of heaven and the sights that we shall see. For the promise has been given that it waits for you and me. Though the heart can scarce imagine just how splendid it will be, to roam the blue hills of heaven throughout all eternity. (Ch) On the blue hills of heaven we will sing forevermore. On the blue hills of heaven there are loved ones gone before. I will see my grey haired daddy, though his hair is grey no more. On the blue hills of heaven, by that bright Elysian shore. (Vs) Will my mansion on the hilltop overlook the crystal sea? With a view that it forever, throughout all eternity? There the SON is always shining. He's the one who set us free, to roam the blue hills of heaven, throughout all eternity. (Ch) On the blue hills of heaven we will sing forevermore. On the blue hills of heaven there are loved ones gone before. I will see my sainted mother, there a saint forevermore. On the blue hills of heaven, by that bright Elysian shore. (Vs) In that land of great forever, there are many sights to see. What a wonderland of beauty! What a wondrous place to be! All because the Lord of glory gave His life on Calvary, we'll roam the blue hills of heaven throughout all eternity. (Ch) On the blue hills of heaven we will sing forevermore. On the blue hills of heaven there are loved ones gone before. I will see my crippled sister, though she's crippled there no more. On the blue hills of heaven, by that bright Elysian shore. (Tag) On the blue hills of heaven, by that bright Elysian shore.

DIABETES

In September of 2007 I learned that I was diabetic. I might not have know this until much later, had I not gotten regular yearly checkups. The symptoms often lie hidden for many years. If you are one of my descendents, please get a yearly checkup, at the very least. Diabetes is hereditary, and there have been several diabetics on both sides of our family.

With modern medications, plenty of exercise, and a proper diet, diabetes is controllable..... if you choose to control it. For years following the time that I was first diagnosed, all I did was to take the medication my doctor prescribed. I didn't exercise or eat properly. I didn't check my blood sugar levels on any regular basis. This was a **big** mistake, and I have lived to regret it. I now have neuropathy in both of my feet. I should have known better. Dad used to tell us, "My feet feel like two chunks of ice". I now have that same symptom from time. I have numbness in both of my feet due to diabetes induced neuropathy. Whenever I eat, especially if I eat something high in carbohydrates, it will be only a matter of minutes before my feet begin to tingle. This numbness and tingling is most bothersome at bedtime, when I'm not distracted by other things.

I was 56 years old when I was first diagnosed. What I'm telling you is, don't just assume you won't get it. And if you do get it, don't assume that simply because you are not feeling any symptoms, everything is alright. The symptoms come on gradually. By the time you notice them, damage has already been done to your body. Prolonged high blood sugar levels will damage your nerves and your organs, including your eyes and your heart. My dad most likely died from a heart attack, although no autopsy was performed. So, let your doctor know that diabetes runs in your family. Get tested at least yearly for excessive blood sugar levels. The test is called HA1C, or A1C. If your A1C tests below 5.7%, that is good. If not, your doctor will no doubt council you to start aggressively controlling your blood sugar levels. I've learned a lot about living with diabetes in the last 16 years. I'd like to pass along a few tips to my family:

Carbohydrates are a diabetics enemy. Sugar is a carbohydrate. So are starches. Your body will convert starches to sugar. In general, limit white foods such as bread, white rice and potatoes. These are all high in starches. Many fruits are high in sugar. Avoid too much cake, candy and ice cream. You can enjoy all of these from time to time, but do so in moderation. Meats have very few carbohydrates in them. But meats do contain cholesterol, so keep that in mind. Keep track of your blood sugar daily if you are diabetic. You will want your blood sugar readings to be

below 140 most of the time, and not over 180 two hours after a meal. Anything over 180 will do damage to your organs... damage that will surly accumulate over time. And finally, don't fail to exercise. If you will get your heart rate up to around 110 beats per minute for 30 minutes at least 5 days a week, this will help immensely.

In August of 2008 I wrote a praise song called, "Excellent Is Thy Name In All The Earth". We don't offer God enough praise. I think one of the devil's primary objectives is to try and make us believe that God doesn't love us and that He is looking for reasons to punish us. Nothing could be further from the truth! We should all commit the following verse to memory. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16). Satan will cause evil things to happen, (often with the cooperation of people), then try to make us believe that its God's fault. But God loves you and me, and He has only our best interest at heart. We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). Don't ever let the devil steal from you the truth that God loves you. Without faith, it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6).

#116 Excellent Is Thy Name In All The Earth

Excellent is Thy name oh Lord. Marvelous are Thy mercies. Excellent is Thy name in all the Earth. Worthy of every praise oh Lord. Worthy of exaltation. Almighty God, we celebrate Thy worth. (Ch) Exaltation! Adoration! Praise goes forth from every nation. Celebrate Him! Elevate Him! Excellent is Thy name in all the Earth. (Vs) Beautiful is thy face oh Lord. Bountiful are thy blessings. Excellent is thy name in all the earth. Worthy of all our thanks oh Lord. Forgiver of our transgressions. Almighty God, we celebrate thy love. (Ch)

In February of 2008 we had the biggest ice and snow storm in my memory. Trees came down under the snows weight, and roads were impassable. A shelter I had installed on our back deck collapsed. The only silver lining was that we had a winter wonderland to marvel at. The ice glistening off the trees in the sunshine was amazing. Then, in March, we had the biggest flood in my memory. To this day it has been the only time I have seen Commercial Street in Harrisburg under water.

I bought my final motorcycle in June of 2008. It was a candy apple red Kawasaki Vulcan 500, and it was a beauty. I kept that bike until 2022, when I sold it due to lack of use. From 1965 until then, I was rarely without a motorcycle. I was without one for a while around 1985 though, when I had one stolen from me. I was in the habit of parking my bike at

Saint Mary's Catholic church in Buena Vista, where I would meet up with my work carpool. One day, my riders dropped me off after work and the bike was gone. Someone had stolen it from in front of the church! I reported it to the police, but I never heard anything back from them. The thieves made a clean getaway.

Early that spring, we took the grandkids to Bell Smith Springs. As we were wading in one of the streams, I slipped and hit my head on a rock. I didn't think too much about it at the time, but later I developed double vision. The vision in my right eye appeared higher that in my left eye. The eye doctor told me that, should the eye not repair itself, my brain might eventually compensate, and I would perceive things normally again. I don't know which happened, but after several weeks, my vision returned to normal. The human brain is a marvelous creation of God. We are created in God's image (Genesis 1:26).

**

I don't think most of us stop to realize just how special we are... how special we are to God. To be alive is something so extraordinary, and we just don't seem to get it! I'm reminded of the frog story:

A scientist placed a frog in a comfortable, safe habitat in his lab. He left the frog there for a month, and the frog thrived. Then, he started slowly raising the temperature of the water in the habit by one half of a degree each week. The frog happily adapted and didn't notice the small weekly increases in temperature... until... one day the frog died. Without the frog realizing it, the temperature in his habitat had risen to a point that its internal organs could no longer function.

I'm afraid that you and I may be a little like that frog. We live in a society where the morals are slowly getting worse. What would have shocked us a year ago, becomes so commonplace that we might accept it as normal. Are we slowly being cooked, like the frog? If we do not stay grounded in God, if we do not read our Bibles, if we do not pray regularly, the potential is there for us to fall asleep, spiritually. Not all that long ago I went through a very dark period. God tried to bring me out of it with relatively gentle measures at first. When I didn't respond, He increased the pressure. "Whom the Lord loves, He chastises." (Hebrews 12:6). Finally, He put me under such heavy conviction that I broke. When I did, He spoke these words to me: "You were sleeping in darkness." And I had been. Thanks be to God, He is slow to anger, quick to forgive and full of tender mercy. His mercy is new every morning. Thank you Heavenly Father!

You and I are only here on Earth for a short time. I believe Earth is a proving ground for us. We get to choose whether we will follow God, or follow ourselves. Choose wisely. Our eternal souls hang in the balance.

But we cannot save ourselves, any more than we can pick ourselves up by our own bootstraps. (Try that sometimes). God saves us by His grace, when we believe Jesus died for us, in order to pay for our sins and ask him to live in our hearts. And we can't take credit for this. It is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, (or for the bad things we have avoided), so none of us can boast about it. (Ephesians 1:8-9) Salvation is a free gift, a gift that we must choose to accept, or reject. We can't just, "add Jesus to our lives". We must give our lives to Him. Okay, I am through preaching for a while.

***

In April, I wrote my 117th song, "Rough Edges". This is another very good song. It song talks about our humanity, and how Christians still have rough edges. We are far from perfect! Look for the sheet music in the appendix.

#117 Rough Edges

V1: I'm a work in progress. I've still got a long way to go. Sometimes the changes are hard, my evolution is slow. And often a mountain's too high or a valley's too low. Got a lot of rough edges to smooth. Got a long way to go. (Ch) Still got some rough old edges to work on. Still got some, rough edges to work on. Seems like sometimes, it's taking way too long. Still got some, rough edges to work on. (Vs) I'm a dusty diamond with a lot of rough edges to smooth. Sometimes when changing it's hard to see the light shining through. But someday I'll shine like a diamond that's sparkling new. Got a lot of rough edges to smooth before this diamond is true. (Ch) (Vs) We're a work in progress. Whenever the going is slow, well, the Lord up above understands it takes a lifetime to grow. No mountain's too high for our Lord, and just so you know, It takes some time under pressure my friend, to get a diamond to glow. (Ch)

JALYN SUE MARTIN IS BORN

July of 2009 brought us another precious gift. On July 7th, Jason and Melinda presented us with our 5th grandchild, Jalyn Sue Martin. What a special child! The names Jason and Lyndell were combined to form her first name. Jalyn has been gifted with a great talent for drawing and also in music. She asked me to help her learn how to play the guitar, and she is a very quick learner. She is also teaching herself to play piano. Jalyn played some Mozart for me just the other day. She told me that I inspired her to work with music. Who knows, maybe she will go on to write songs like her grandpa Buddy, or become a commercial artist! Jalyn is also active in sports and cheerleading at her school.

2010 proved to be a highly productive year for my songwriting. I released my first album, "I Talked To An Angel", early that year. It contains 12 songs. Eleven of them are songs written by me. The twelfth song is an instrumental version of Amazing Grace, which I produced and arranged using a software program. The album was released for distribution on several major music sites, including Apple iTunes, Amazon Music, Spotify and many others. This album, along with another one I will mention later, are still available on those venues. I've actually received a few royalty checks from the sale and streaming of the songs on these albums. My royalties have been offerings to the Lord.

In June I wrote, "A Better Man". I should have titled it, "A Bitter Man", because, unbeknownst to me, there had already been a song released under the title, "A Better Man". Clint Black's mega hit of 1989 bears the same name. It became the number one song on the country music charts that year. I never knew about it until after I had already written and recorded my own song by the same name. I like mine better! "A Better Man" started out as a secular song, but I used the last verse to give it a religious turn.

#118 A Better (or Bitter) Man

I used to be a bitter man. I left my wife. Thought I had a plan. I don't know if she ever could take me back again. I bought a gun and stole a car. I tried to run but I didn't get far. Now I'm staring at four gray prison walls. (Ch) Lord, these prison walls teach a man how to crawl. And I don't want to be behind prison walls. (Vs) I'm so ashamed of the things I've done. How I lived my life mostly on the run. Don't know what I was running from. Thought I was having fun. I dealt the cards and played my hand. Now I realize I was a bitter man. And I don't want to be a bitter man. (Ch) Lord, a bitter man takes his life in his own hands. And I don't want to die a bitter man. (Vs) I want to be a better man. Live the rest of my life the best I can. Do what I ought to do. Man, take a stand. How can I be a better man without you lord? Please, take my hand. 'Cause I won't want to die a bitter man. (Ch) Lord, a better man takes his children by the hand. And Lord, I want to be a better man. Tag: Yes Lord, I want to be and I'm going to be a better man.

In July I wrote "Semi Rider" It's a song about a fellow who was searching for meaning in his life. He started hitching rides from town to town, hoping to fill the emptiness in his heart. In each new town, he found only trouble. Until, one day, he hitched a ride with a Christian semi-driver who led him to the Lord. As the song ends, he is living back in his own hometown and leading people to the Lord himself.

#119 Semi Rider

(Vs 1) Here, I'm walking down the highway, hoping for a better day. There ain't nothin' for a man like me back in my hometown. I tried to do it my way. But I couldn't make it pay. Now, I'm lookin' for a good time town that won't let me down. (Ch 1) Tried to do it my way. Now I'm on the highway. Flaggin' down a semi. Hopin' I can catch a ride. Someone, take me to the next town. Maybe they won't let me down. Maybe I can find a bride that will suit my pride. (Vs 2) I met a woman in the next town, but they were givin' us the runaround. They took all my money, and let me tell you honey, we're leavin' when the sun goes down. We're headin' for the highway. There ain't nothin' they can do or say. There ain't nothin' in this one horse town can make me turn around. (Ch 2) Tried to do it my way. Now we're back out on the highway. Flaggin' down a semi, hopin' we can catch a ride. Someone take us to the next town. Maybe they won't let me down. Maybe with a brand new bride, I can hit my stride. (Vs 3) That woman left me in the next town. She really put the hammer down. She spent all my money, and let me tell you honey, I'm leavin' when the sun goes down. She hit me with her best shot, and even though it hurt a lot, I never was the kind of clown to take it layin' down. (Ch 3) I was thumin' to the next town. Semi driver turned around. He said, "Tell me what's a man like you doin' so low down?" He said, "I got somthin' else to say. Let me tell you 'bout a better way". And somewhere on that highway, I gave up goin' my way. I finally laid my burdens down. (Vs 4) Now I'm livin' back in my town. Everything has turned around. There ain't nothin' they can do or say that will get me down. 'Cause I'm doin' it the Lord's way. Let me tell you 'bout a better day. I'm followin' the Savior. I'm livin' in his favor. This semi rider's heaven bound. (End)

Around this time I developed severe pain in my abdomen and my back. A trip to the doctor revealed that my gall bladder was badly inflamed. The doctor recommended immediate surgery. After its removal, I got nearly instant relief. Keep this in mind if you ever have those kinds of symptoms. Don't suffer with the pain for as long as I did! Birdie has had to have her gall bladder removed as well.

Another song I wrote in July was "Quite a Lovely Day". This is a love song that I dedicated to Birdie. It starts out with a gentleman inviting a casual acquaintance to take a stroll. Each verse progresses through their dating, marrying, having babies and spending eternity together in Heaven. The melody was inspired by the Paul McCartney song, "English Tea". I believe

that my song is quite a bit better than his, both in lyrics and melody! Give them both a listen and judge for yourself. This is one of my favorite songs.

#120 Quite A Lovely Day

Would you like to walk with me? Take a stroll down by the sea. We could share a cup of tea. Spend the day together. It would be just you and me. Conversation by the sea. Tea for two and two for tea. Quite a lovely day. (Ch) Picnic baskets filled with wishes. So delightful! How delicious. So enchanting and exciting. How romantic. I'm inviting you, on this lovely day. (Vs)
Would you like to be my friend? Who could say how that might end? Heaven knows, so let’s begin. Spend some time together. I could share my dreams with you. You could make them all come true. If you say you love me too, on this lovely day. (Ch) Pretty baskets filled with flowers. We could sit and talk for hours. Chocolate covered candy kisses. I your Mister. You my Misses. Stay, on this lovely day. (Vs) Would you like to marry me? We could raise a family. Make our home down by the sea. Share our lives together. Have some children. Two or three. Maybe more, if you agree. I'll love you and you'll love me. Quite a lovely way. (Ch) Baby baskets filled with children. So delightful. Are you willing? So enchanting and exciting. How romantic! I'm inviting you on this lovely day. (Vs) Would you like to walk with me, down through all eternity? See how happy we would be, evermore together. Sharing love with family. Strolling by the Crystal sea. I'll love you and you'll love me. Quite a lovely way. (Ch) All those baskets, could be ours. Pretty babies. Pretty flowers. So enchanting and exciting. How romantic. I'm inviting you to an endless day.

**

My comment about McCartney's song vs. my song brings up, I think, an interesting point. As a general rule, we tend to do our best creative work when we are young. There are some exceptions but for the most part, it's true. You don't see people in their 70's breaking track and field records. We just get physically weaker as we age. The same is true for our mental acuity. We are generally at our *potential* peak in our mid to late 20's. Most great scientific discoveries have been made by people under the age of 30. Albert Einstein is a good example. He discovered the Theory of Relativity in his mid 20's. Great song writers, such as Paul Simon, Paul McCartney, Neil Diamond, Carol King, Bob Dylan, Elton John... and I could go on and on... wrote their greatest music at a relatively young age. I have found this to be true with my music as well. Once I turned 60, my music production dropped both in quantity and in quality. I still had a few good songs left in me, but they were now fewer and further between. What am I saying? If you are still in your youth, go for it! Don't put off till later what you can do better today. That later time may never come. And

if it does, you may not be at your fullest potential. But, even if you are older, don't give up. Mark Twain published his first book in his 40'S!

MY DEEP INTEREST IN PHYSICS

Earlier in the book I mentioned my deep interest in space and in space flight. Over the years these interests have developed into a love for science in general and physics in particular. Two of my favorite physicists are Albert Einstein and Richard Feynman. Einstein gave us the theory of relativity, and Feynman did pioneering work in the field of quantum electrodynamics. If you study either of these fields, you will come away completely amazed at the true nature of reality. Einstein showed us, among other things, that time is relative. If you could travel away from Earth for 25 years at *near* the speed of light, then return at the same speed, you would return to an earth that had aged by thousands of years. Everyone you knew when you left would now be dead and buried, while you would have aged not much more than 25 years. This is time travel in its truest sense.

The laws of physics allow for the possibility of traveling forward in time, but not backward in time. Going backward in time would require one to travel faster that the speed of light. But God has set the maximum speed limit of the universe to be the speed of light. That's a good thing. Suppose one were to be able to travel backward in time and shoot their own grandfather before their father was ever conceived. This would present a paradox, because you would then never have been born.

As stated, near the speed of light, time slows down significantly for the time traveler. This is not a "free lunch" however, because the time traveler will still perceive time as passing for himself at a normal rate. He or she may have moved 25 years forward in time relative to the people on earth, but he/she will not have perceived his/her lifespan to be any greater. At the speed of light, time stands completely still. I find it very interesting that 1st John 1:5 says, "...God is light, and in Him there is no darkness". (and no ageing either!)

Quantum physics tells us that in the realm of the very small, (think atoms, photons and electrons), common sense flies even further out the window. For example, things of that size can be in more than one place at the same time. I find it extreemly interesting that Proverbs 15:3 says, "The eyes of the Lord are in <u>every</u> place, watching the evil and the good". If you think about it, this scripture says that, God's eyes are in more than one place at a time.

While I am discussing physics, this is a good place to mention artificial intelligence (AI). At this writing, AI is still in it's infancy, but already it is accomplishing amazing things. AI, like most things, can be used for good or for bad. Criminals are using it to mimic real people. You may think you're getting a phone call from a relative, but it may be AI mimicking their voice. This has already happened. For this reason, it's a good idea to have a secret code word known to only you and your loved ones. Then, if you get an unusual call asking for money, you can ask for the code word. If they don't know it, beware! AI is not only being used to mimick the human voice, but also the human body itself. I recently saw a video that I would have sworn was Tom Cruise playing guitar and singing. But it wasn't him. It was AI! What if a sinister force mimicked the voice and image of the president of the United States and went on national television to declare war? It could start a Global war. AI is also being used in online chat rooms. You may think you're chatting with an individual when you are actually chatting with an AI ChatBot. Who knows what they might try to convince you of?

And this is only the beginning. Is it possible that AI could eventually develope a psudo consciousness and decide that the human race needs to be eleminated before it destroys "their" Earth? The possibility seems far fetched as I write these words, but probably no more far fetched than putting a man on the moon would have seemed to ancient marioners. I could write pages more on this subject, but this book is already getting lengthy. Did you know that, in the past 10 years, authors have shrunk the length of the agerage novel by nearly 50%. The reason? We humans are losing our collective span of attention. We are too busy scrolling on our iPhones to be bothered with reading a long book!

***

I had written songs for both of my previous granddaughters, and now it was time to write one for Jalyn. I wrote "Jalyn, Have a Lovely Life" in November of 2010. The song follows Jalyn through four important stages of her life: 1) At home with her family, 2) off to school, 3) getting married and, finally, 4) raising her own family. The song ends by reminding us that our children repeat the same cycle of life as we do. The closeing statement is simple, but profound: So go the circles of our lives.

#121 Jalyn, Have a Lovely Life

Jalyn have a lovely day. Have a lovely day today. Sit with me a while and smile that pretty smile. Jalyn, have a lovely day. (Ch) The sun is out today. There's lots of time for play. Soon daddy will be on his way. He loves to play with you, Baleigh, Keenan, Kendall too. So Jalyn have a lovely day. (Vs) Jalyn have a happy day. Have a happy day today. It's your first day of

school. Obey the Golden Rule. Jalyn have a happy day. (Ch) Today you'll wear your new dress. Be careful now at recess, and follow what the teachers say. And when the day is through, we'll be waiting here for you. So Jalyn have a happy day. (Vs) Jalyn, it's a special day. A very special day today. Today you'll be a new bride, a handsome groom by your side. Jalyn what a special day. (Ch) Today you'll start a new life. All grown up. A new wife. Be faithful to the vows you say. You're such a lovely bride. Mom and dad are filled with pride. Oh, Jalyn what a special day. (Vs) Jalyn it's a special day. Another special day today. Your baby's on his way and he'll be born today. Jalyn what a special day. (Ch) Someday he'll go to school, obey the Golden Rule. Someday he'll find a lovely wife. One day they'll have a son. A new life has begun. So go the circles of our lives. (Tag) Jalyn have a lovely life!

I wrote two more songs in November. Song #122 is "Master of Master's" and song #123 is "Keep On Climbing." I'm not particularly fond of either. My muse was becoming less consistent. I have since realized that my next several songs were mostly of a secular nature. I was still using my God given talent, but now I was using it for other purposes. Not wise!

In December I wrote song #124, a nice lullaby I called "Sleep Little Children". It is copyrighted under that name. However, I would later renamed the song. Why? When Jade gave birth to Briar Lynn, I realized that the song was actually meant to be hers. So I rewrote the lyrics and renamed the song. It is called "Sleep Little Briar" and is also known as "Briar's Lullaby" or simply, "Briar's Song". I will set the lyrics aside for now and present them when we get to Briar's birth.

In February of 2011 I wrote a secular song I called, "Our Favorite Song". I don't recall the inspiration for it, but it's about a fellow who heard a song on the radio and it became his favorite song. That same summer he met a girl and fell in love with her. She became his favorite girl. Then one day the girl started singing "his" song, and they discoverd that they both had the same favorite song. I think the song has a great little tune but I've never had it professionally recorded. I did record a version of it myself. If there's room, I may include that on th CD at the back of this book.

#125 Our Favorite Song

I heard it on the radio, not too many years ago. But at the time I didn't know it would be my favorite song. They played it all that summer long. It cheered me up when things went wrong. Somehow I felt that it belonged just to me. My favorite song. (Ch) All summer long I was singing that song. Just singing along to my favorite song. What can go wrong when you're just singing a song? (Vs) I met her at a picture show. She walked right up

and said hello. But at the time I didn't know she would be my favorite girl. We watched the show then took a stroll. I walked her home and what do you know? Somehow I felt that she belonged just to me. My favorite girl. (Ch) She had to go in. I said, "I'll see you again". I went strolling back home. I was singing my song. What can go wrong when you're just singing a song? (Vs) We dated all that summer long. She cheered me up when things went wrong. How sweet to know that she belonged just to me. My favorite girl. And then one day I heard her singing my song. I said, "Hey! What's that?" She said, "Sing along. Why, don't you know? I'm only singing my song. My favorite song." (Ch) Strolling along. Now, we're strolling along. Just singing our song. Our favorite song. What can go wrong when we're just singing our song? Our favorite song.

In March, I started a song that I could not finish. I wrote a melody for the verse, but couldn't come up with a chorus, so I abandoned song # 126 with no lyrics and no title.

March turned to December before I wrote my next song, "Santa's Reindeer Fly". It's a really neat little Christmas song about a boy who believed he saw Santa's Reindeer Flying, though It had actually been just a vivid dream. When he told his parents on Christmas day that it had actually happened, they sent him to his room. If you listen very carefully, you may notice that some of the tune from "Frosty The Snowman" crept onto the melody, unbeknonsed to me. I realized this only later. I've actually improved some of the lyrics since I had it recoreded. The most recent lyrics are reproduced below.

#127 Santa's Reindeer Fly

They say that Santa's reindeer fly but I did not believe. I watched and waited through the night. The night of Christmas Eve. At 12 O'clock, right on the dot, could not believe my eyes! Nine tiny reindeer and a sleigh went flashing through the skies. (Ch) I counted reindeer in the sky all lined up in a line. Dasher, Dancer, Prancer too, and Santa close behind. ("One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine", in the recorded version.) (Vs) Nine tiny reindeer in the sky were bearing gifts on high. Bringing toys to girls and boys, asleep on Christmas night. Dancing through the air. Prancing everywhere. Oh, what a lovely sight to see those reindeer in the air. (Ch) On Christmas day I had to say that I saw reindeer fly. My mamma sent me to my room. She thought I'd lost my mind. (Vs) But I saw reindeer in the sky and this you can believe. So watch for deer this time next year, the night of Christmas Eve. And when those deer appear, it's clear, it won't be very long, till Santa down your chimney comes, singing Christmas songs. (Ch) He will not tarry very long. He must be on his way. So keep your eyes on Christmas skies for Santa and his

sleigh. (Vs) If you see reindeer in the sky, I know you will believe. So watch for deer this time next year, the night of Christmas Eve. The Lord above bless all with love, the night of Christmas Eve!

JASON IS DIAGNOSED WITH PTSD

Jason developed severe Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in 2012 and became unable to work. The PTSD appears to have been triggered by several close calls Jason had in the coal mines. A couple of times, he nearly lost his life. One experience he related to me was that he came within inches of getting killed by a rock that was traveling down a conveyor belt he had been working near. He said the only thing that saved him was a notch that he was able to squeeze into while the rock passed by, missing him by only inches. Doctors diagnosed Jason with PTSD and he was awarded SSI. This was a terrible time in all of our lives, but God pulled us through it. Even to this day Jason suffers from anxiety. Especially social anxiety.

TORNADO!

The night of February 29, 2012, I had been sleeping peacefully until I had to get up to use the bathroom. As I was walking back to bed, I heard what sounded like a train going by at a high rate of speed. This was very odd, as there are no train tracks near our home. I woke Birdie up to tell her about it. The sound passed quickly, so I went back to bed.

I had just gotten settled in bed when the phone rang. It was my sister, calling from Galatia. She had just gotten word from a friend that Harrisburg had been hit by a tornado. She said there were bodies laying in a field east of Harrisburg Wal-Mart. That was near where her husband Jim's cousin lived. We didn't sleep much the rest of that night.

In the morning, we got up early and went to town. This had been an EF4 tornado, with 180 miles per hour winds. There was near total destruction in the areas where the tornado had touched down. Most of the damage was on the south side of town. My cousin Pearlie lived in that area. When I made my way to her house, I found that the tornado had missed her by only a few blocks. Eight people were killed that night, including two of Jim's cousins, Randy and Donna Patterson Rann. Their bodies were found in the field behind Wal-Mart. Six other people also lost their lives, and more than one hundred others were injured.

In July of 2012 mom turned 90. We honored her with a get together at my sister Pat's church, northwest of Galatia. Mom was failing by this time, and was sometimes in a wheelchair. She kept a brave face though, and she kept her spirits up. What a grand lady mom was!

KENDALL BAYNE MARTIN IS BORN

On December 3rd, 2012, Kendall Bayne Martin was born. What a special boy! The name Kendall was derived from my name, Lyndell. The middle name of Bayne was chosen in honor of Birdie's maiden name. Had Kendall been born five days later, he and I would have shared the same birthday. You may recall that his older brother, Keenan shares the same birthday as my mom, July 27th! Kendall is in 5th grade at this writing and is a great student. He's always winning awards! And he LOVES Plushies!

Also in 2012, my Aunt Eula Moore was diagnosed with cancer. She was a widow lady, with no children... what the bible calls, "a widow indeed". Her husband had left her financially well off though, so she wasn't at all destitute. She once told me how Uncle Bob's died. Her and Bob had been sitting on their couch talking. Bob excused himself, explaining that he was going to the bathroom. When he didn't return after several minutes, Aunt Eula went to check on him. She discovered him dead, from a heart attack.

Aunt Eula lived about a year after being diagnosed with cancer. She had asked me to be her executor, and I couldn't refuse her. When she passed away, this turned into a huge undertaking. I don't recommend being an executor... if you can avoid it. There were about ten of us nephews and nieces. Most of them gave no trouble. But a couple of them made some things very difficult for me. I eventually got everything settled, but I wouldn't want to go through that experience again. At Aunt Eula's funeral, the pastor was speaking at the graveside when he suddenly stopped and looked at me. I will never forget his words. He said, "I see Jesus in this man's eyes... just as plain!" He approached me after the service and said, "Wasn't that something?"

As a word of advice, if you ever find yourself, or an elderly loved one living alone, set up a monitoring system. Get one that can be worn around their neck, if those are still available in your day and time. Get the kind that detects a fall and automatically calls someone. I say this because, before Aunt Eula died, I dropped by to check on her one day and she didn't answer her door. I didn't have a key to get in, and she didn't answer her phone. So I called a cousin who had a key. They went over and found Eula in the bathroom floor. She had fallen and lain there overnight, seriously injured and unable to get up. I shudder to think what might have happened to her, had I not stopped by to check on her!

I was never an avid hunter, but in February of 2013, I went deer hunting in our woods west of our house on Willow Grove Road. I was in the tree stand for only a short time when several does passed by in a group. Close behind them followed a nice 9 point buck! When I raised and shot, the buck jumped high in the air, then turned and jumped a fence. When I went looking for him down the fence line, I saw no sign of him. After about a quarter of a mile, I turned back, convinced he had gotten away. But as I neared my deer stand, I saw movement to my right. It was the wounded buck trying to get up. As much as I hated to, I had to shoot him again. This time it was at close range, with him looking right at me. That was a hard shot to take. I have him mounted on my wall, but I was never keen on deer hunting after that. I don't believe I ever went hunting again. I like to say that every time I've gone deer hunting, I've gotten a 9 point buck! Birdie was proud of me though. She said, "Well, at least we know that if it ever comes down to it, you can provide us with meat."

Mom had a mini stroke in 2013 and started failing more. We three kids set up a schedule to take turns staying with her, as needed. She recovered from the stroke, but continued to weaken over the next few years, until a major crisis occurred in 2015. More on that later.

MY RETIREMENT

In June of 2013, I had accrued enough time with Unit 3 school district to draw a small pension from the IMRF. This would add to my Peabody pension. And since I was 62, I was now old enough to draw social security. So with these three sources of income, plus a nice nest egg from savings, I was able, thanks be to God, to retire! (See page 40 of this book for some sound retirement advice.) I took a picture of the sunrise the first morning of my retirement, but that picture is probably lost to the ages. Now that I was retired, it was time to do some traveling!

That same month, Birdie and I took Dora to visit with her youngest son, Darryl, who was now living in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. This is the same son that Dora almost miscarried. It was Darryl with whom she was pregnant when Jesus appeared to her. (Jesus warned her that she could miscarry.) Darryl went on to graduate from SIU in Carbondale with a business degree. At the age of 43, he was running a very lucrative loan office in Myrtle Beach.

In July, we took a family trip to Panama City, Florida. Those attending were Birdie, Mandi, Wade, Jade, Tristan, Baleigh and me. We all had a wonderful time, especially on the beach. And we got plenty of great pictures.

TRIP TO WASHINGTON, DC

In September, the United Mine Workers of America organized and financed a massive rally to be held in Washington DC. Birdie wasn't able to go, but I was there. We were fighting for our healthcare benefits. It's a long story, but I will try to be brief.

In 1946, President Harry Truman made a promise to the United Mine Workers of America. "The Promise", was a deal struck between the United States Government and the UMWA, (and accepted by the coal operators), to end a nationwide strike by the Union. The Promise did several things, but none was more important than guaranteeing retirement security for coal miners and their families for their service to the Nation. This included health care coverage. (Source, umwa.org)

However, in 1963, the United States Government implemented the "Clean Air Act", which set in motion a relentless attack on the coal industry. The burning of high sulfur coal was cited as a major source of pollution. Stringent regulations against the burning of coal were put in place, and electrical power plants all across the country were forced to look for other means of producing electricity. Natural gas became a cheaper alternative. Coal was slowly being choked out.

The coal producers were forced to close numerous mines. They also sought out ways to cut their costs in their remaining mines. One of the first things they went after was their labor force... the coal miners themselves. They went after our health care benefits, seeking to reduce, or eliminate them.

The UMWA fought back, citing the 1946 promise of cradle to grave health care. It became an epic struggle. The coal producers wanted to eliminate the UMWA. UMWA members wanted what had been promised to them. Nationwide rally's were organized and attended by thousands of miners, including me. This eventually led to a huge rally in Washington D.C. We were intent upon compelling the Government to live up to their promise. This caught the attention of some powerful members of congress. These brave congressmen fought alongside our union to pass legislation which assured health care coverage for both working and retired miners. The only stipulation was that a retired miner was required to have at least 20 years of service in the coal industry in order to qualify. I had almost 23 years of service. We now have some of the finest health care coverage in the world. The Lord was certainly watching out for us!

In November, while driving home from town one day, I heard a song on the radio. A few notes from the song stuck in my head, so when I got home I set out to write a song. It ended up becoming, "Love Can Last Forever". It was a love song about a couple who had broken up. The man was hoping to revive the relationship. He would stand on the street outside her house, hoping to catch just a glimpse of her. One day, he did and the story evolves from there. The song has a beautiful melody and lovely lyrics. I commissioned a demo from a fellow in Kentucky. However, he changed the melody and I need to have it redone. I do, however, have a correct instrumental version on Audo.com. Search for Lyndell Martin.

#129 Love Can Last Forever

I was standing outside your window. You must have seen me crying. Knowing our love was over had caused my world to end. Then I saw a fleeting shadow dance across your window pane. And I felt that old familiar feeling come into my heart again. (Ch) Love can make you happy. Love can make you cry. I believed that our love would last forever, until the day you said goodbye. (Interlude) (Vs) Then you were standing beside your window. I thought I saw you crying. Maybe you still love me, and I can live again. Then I heard you softly whisper, "Let's give our love just one more chance." And I felt that old familiar feeling flowing through my heart again. (Ch) Love can make you happy. Love can make you cry. I believe that our love will last forever. We'll never have to say goodbye.

ALLIE

House pets usually become a part of the family. Our dog, Jake, had reached an advanced age. He was very ill and suffering. Something had to be done. It was up to us to help him, so I took him to our vet. As the vet injected Jake, he licked my arm and breathed his last.

We had told ourselves that we didn't want to go through losing another dog. But Birdie and I were empty nesters, and when we found Allie, we fell in love with her. Birdie and I adopted Allie in February of 2014. She has been the smartest dog we've ever owned. She watches TV with us. If a commercial comes on that has a dog in it, she knows immediately, and she starts barking. It's going to be a sad day when Allie leaves. She will soon turn 10.

In April, I wrote "Santa's Visit". It's about Santa and his sleigh falling through the roof of a little boy's house and landing in his room. It's a pretty good song, but I won't reproduce it here. It will be among the sheet music in appendix F.

In September, I wrote my one and only boogie-woogie song: "Dance Party Tonight". It's about how Christians can have a good time without having to resort to booze. It's pretty peppy, but not one of my better songs. The muse was continuing to wane.

BACK TO COLORADO

In July of 2015, we took our second trip to Colorado. On this trip it was Birdie, Mandi, Wade, Tristan and me. Jade was already living in Colorado, working at Jackson Stables, near Estate Park. The coordinates are 40°20'33"N 105°34'55"W. The terrain there is absolutely beautiful! Jade was working as a Wrangler. Her main job was to lead horseback tours into the mountains. She also supervised horse drawn wagon tours. For Jade, this was a dream job. She not only got to go horseback riding every day, but she got paid for it... and in some of the most beautiful terrain you can imagine.
As on our first trip to Colorado, we camped out. Hermit Park campgrounds lie south of the town of Estes Park. It was a great place to pitch our tents for a few days. After visiting Jackson Stables and touring Estes Park, we grabbed Jade and traveled south through the Rocky Mountains. We spent another few days camping at our old stomping grounds on the Blue River, near Silverthorne.

Incidentally, we also spent some time touring the Stanley Hotel in Estes Park. Some of you Stephen King fans might find it interesting to know that he wrote most of his book, "The Shining", at the Stanley. It's a huge hotel, situated at the foot of some high mountain peaks. The Shining was eventually made into a major motion picture. If you've never seen the Stanley, put it on your bucket list. (The movie was filmed at a different location.)

MEDIASTINITIS

I became ill shortly after we returned from our vacation in the Rockies. I was listless and losing weight. One day while getting up from an afternoon nap, I was so weak that I fell back onto the bed. I knew it was time to see a doctor. The hospital diagnosed me with Mediastinitis and called for a helicopter to life flight me to Barns Hospital in St. Louis. This was a potentially life threatening situation. A surgical procedure was done at Barnes to identify the type of infection, but the hospital lost the specimen! Since they still didn't know what type of infection(s) I had, they proceeded to treat me with a variety of very strong antibiotics. I

underwent three surgeries to remove pockets of infection from my sternum. After two weeks of hospitalization, they allowed me to go home with a feeding tube and enough medication and antibiotics for several more weeks of at home treatment. I was on a liquid diet the entire time.

I would like to say that Birdie was right by my side as much as she possibly could be. When she wasn't allowed in my hospital room, she stayed in the hospital waiting area, often alone. She spent several sleepless nights there. Bless her heart! When my son and daughter came to visit, they and Birdie found a hotel to stay in. Pat and Jim also came to visit, and Jim gave Birdie some $100 to help her with expenses. You don't forget things like that.

When we returned home, Mandi helped us set up a schedule for administering the antibiotics and other medications. We couldn't have done it without her. So, I just want to say thank you to my family for sticking with me during my illness. I'd also like to thank our church and our pastor. They maintained a prayer chain for us during the entire time. Most of all, I thank God for His healing touch. As I said, you don't forget things like that.

I had been without solid food for about a month and had lost a LOT of weight. However, after the feeding tube was removed, I quickly returned to my normal weight and was given a clean bill of health from my doctors. I give God the glory.

TRISTAN AND I VISIT CHICAGO

The very next month, my grandson Tristan and I went on an adventure together. I wanted him to see some of the things I had seen as a child. We boarded a train in Carbondale early one October morning and arrived at Chicago's Union Station around noon. We were traveling light. Everything we took with us was in a backpack on Tristan's back. We decided it would be an adventure to walk from Union Station to our hotel. Since we were already near the 110 story Willis Tower, Chicago's tallest building, we decided to investigate that first. My memory went back to the time I was in Chicago, fresh out of college and looking for a job. Willis Tower was known as Sears Tower back then. The construction workers were nearing completion of the tower, and I remember thinking that the men working up near the top looked to be the size of ants.

After checking out Willis Tower, we walked east On Adams Street. When we reached Michigan Avenue, we saw the Art Institute of Chicago, one of the largest art museums in the United States. We would have to check this out later. From the Art Institute, we walked North on Michigan Avenue

toward the "Magnificent Mile", near where our room was located. It was actually more than just a room. It was a studio apartment with a full kitchen. The view from our 10th story window on Wacker Drive was pretty spectacular. Trump Tower, Navy Pier, Lake Michigan and the Magnificent mile were all visible and within easy walking distance. The Chicago River lay directly below us.

With only a few days allotted for our vacation, we tried to cram in as much as possible. Of course, we had to go to the Museum of Science and Industry. It's an impressive place. Believe it or not, the "whispering booths" I saw as a child were still there. Somehow, they looked smaller than I remembered. Of course, I was just bigger now. We toured the Nazi U-505 submarine, which had been moved into a giant indoor arena since I was last there in 1963. The submarine looked even bigger that I remembered!

So as not to take up too much space, I will just briefly mention a few other highlights from the museum. We saw the Apollo 8 spacecraft, which first carried men into orbit around the moon on December 23, 1968. As an 18 year old boy, I had watched in awe that night as three brave astronauts telecast live to the world from lunar orbit. The sight of the moon's surface passing swiftly below them was just amazing to me. Those men took turns reciting scripture from the book of Genesis on live TV. It was a moving experience. I recommend that you view the footage online.

There was also a man-made tornado in the museum. It was 40 feet high and quite impressive. There was a mine shaft that you could descend into and experience a "working" coal mine. There was a Boeing 707 aircraft hanging from the ceiling and so many other amazing exhibits. You should take your family to the science museum if you ever have the opportunity. You won't be able to experience it all in one day.

The next day, we ascended to the top of the John Hancock building. What a view! In the following days, we visited Navy Pier, walked the Magnificent Mile, road on the Chicago Transit Authority, and toured the Chicago Art Museum. There was a young man outside the art museum playing his guitar and singing "Don't Let Me Down", a great Beatles tune. He was making quite a good job of it. At another spot, there was a fellow dressed like the Tin Man in the Wizard of Oz. He was standing frozen in place while people threw change into his plate. Sadly, there was a poor elderly woman with no nose sitting on the street, begging for money. We should have given her some. I still think of her from time to time. I hope to see her in heaven one day and apologize for not stopping to help.

MOM'S DEVASTATING FALL

After mom's health started to fail, I set up a monitoring system between our house and hers. This was so I could hear her if something unforeseen happened. One bright sunny day in November, I was sitting in a lawn chair in our front yard, enjoying the crisp Autumn weather and reading Walter Isaacson's excellent biography of Albert Einstein. Everything seemed fine until I suddenly felt an urge to get up and go inside. I believe the Lord had given me a premonition. As soon as I opened our front door, I heard a crash on mom's monitor. I dropped everything and ran down there.

I found mom laying in a doorway between her kitchen and her bedroom. She had caught one of her walker's legs on the edge of a piece of furniture. I asked her if she thought she was seriously hurt and she said, "Yes, I broke my leg". I called for an ambulance, then called Pat and Butch. I followed the ambulance to Harrisburg Hospital. Pat and Butch arrived shortly afterwards. Little did we know that mom would never again set foot in her home.

X-rays showed that her leg was broken in eight places! She needed surgery. After surgery, the doctor told us that he believed, with rehabilitation, mom would regain the full use of her leg. The hospital then transferred her to the Carrier Mills Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. Rehab went well for a while but, after developing a urinary tract infection, mom gave up trying. Mom spent the final three years of her life in that nursing home.

As we had done when mom was ill at home, we set up a schedule for visits. The three of us "kids" took turns visiting her daily. I can say that in the three years and two months that mom was in the nursing home, hardly a day passed that one of us didn't visit her. One of the staff told my sister that mom must have been a great mother, because we kids were so diligent in visiting her. There were some folks in the nursing home that almost never had a visitor of any kind. We could never have done that to our wonderful mom.

Mom tried to be a good soldier but, as time went on, she longed to go home. She even asked if we would build her a little place next to ours that she could live in. Talk about having your heart broken, that will do it. Should we have taken her into our own home? I didn't feel that I should put my wife in that position. I imagine Pat and Butch must have felt the same way. There were some very sad cases in that nursing home. As I mentioned, some never received a visit from anyone. I talked to one lady who said, "I don't know why my son doesn't come and see me." At least, mom never had to say that.

The Beautiful City Of Brotherly Love

In January of 2016, I wrote a poem called, "The Beautiful City of Brotherly Love". I like this poem very much. Rather than commenting on it, I'll just let you read it here. I hope it brings the same emotions to you as it did to me when I had finished it. (It's also in appendix B)

The Beautiful City of Brotherly Love, was a place, so they say, in the sky up above. Now, the people of Bad Town had heard of that city. And they wanted to go there. It sounded so pretty. They decided one day just to pack up and go. “We can be there by noon, if we don’t go too slow.” So they packed up their things and they headed up North. But that wasn’t the right way to get there, of course.

So they headed down South, and they’d gone quite a way, when one fellow "Badkin" had something to say: “We have traveled one hundred and twenty-three miles, with nary a sign of that city of smiles. So let me take charge, for the rest of the day. ‘cause I think we are lost, and have gone the wrong way.”

So he turned them all left and they headed out East. They crossed nineteen rivers. Encountered wild beasts! They traveled for hundreds and hundreds of miles. Down hollows and valleys, up hills, and through trials.

'Till, finally, they figured that way wasn’t best. So they all turned around and they headed out west. They went past St. Louis, and town after town. With nary a smile, but with many a frown.

Then, they came to the Rockies, all lofty and high. One yelled, “Here’s the way to that town in the sky!” So they climbed and they climbed ‘till they got to the top. And one of them said, “It’s not here. We must stop.”

“But where is the city of love?”, someone said. “I don’t see it behind. I don’t see it ahead.” “It must be a fairy tale.”, someone else said. And if looks could have killed, well, that man would be dead.

Midst all this confusion, appeared a small child. He spoke very softly. He acted quite mild. ”I know the way to that city.”, He said. And as quick as a rabbit, they all turned their heads. “I’ve been to The City of Brotherly love, and it’s not down below, and it’s not up above. You never will find it by searching these lands. It’s as close as your breath, or the palms of your hands.

'For The Beautiful City of Brotherly love, lives here in our hearts, though it comes from above. If you only believe, you may live there, right now. The Words of the Bible, have shown us all how.

So they headed back home, without worry or fear. And in just forty days, they saw Bad Town appear. As they rounded the corner, this sign hung above:

"The Beautiful City of Brotherly Love."

This poem brings to mind a scripture in Acts 17:27 - God wanted people to look for him, and perhaps in searching all around for him, they would find him. But he is not far from any of us. (ERV)

**

RESTLESS LEG SYNDROME

If you have never suffered from Restless Leg Syndrome, you are lucky. RLS can take various forms, from achy legs to fidgety legs. You can't seem to keep them still. I've been bothered with it off and on since I've grown older. If you or someone you know suffers from RLS, there are a couple of things I've discovered that help. Too much caffeine can trigger it. Cut back and see if that helps. I believe that too many carbonated soda's can also worsen RLS.

If you do have an RLS attack, be prepared. Here's how: Buy a bottle of 91% or higher rubbing alcohol. Completely dissolve 3 or 4 aspirin in it. When RLS attacks, rub your thighs and legs with it all the way down to your ankles. Apply it liberally and message it in. Then comes the hard part. Do 25 full leg squats. If you can't do 25, do as many as you can. You will eventually get to where you can do 25 of them. I find that holding onto something about waist high while doing the squats makes doing them a lot easier. The edge of a bathroom sink works perfectly for me. That's it! I find that this relieves my RLS and I can rest. Maybe this will help you, or someone you know.

On a more delicate note, should any of you men ever develop serious trouble with urinating, help is available. I had a successful procedure done called a Transurethral Resection of the Prostrate. My surgeon had a rather

unfortunate name, for someone who performs surgery on the male anatomy: Doctor Hatchet! But the surgery worked great!

***

DID YOU PAINT THAT?

In March of 2017, I created my first painting. I was sixty-six years old! I had never been good at drawing, so I just assumed I wouldn't be good at painting either. But I loved to watch "The Joy of Painting" TV show, starring Bob Ross. Bob made painting look easy, and he kept insisting that I could do it to, if I would only try. So I tried. Sure enough, Bob was right. I amazed myself and my family with my first oil painting on canvas. I mean, it wasn't great, but it was pretty good. It turned out much better than I expected.

Since that first painting, I've done a few more. My favorite is a waterfall painting that Jalyn asked me to paint for her. I've also been asked by Jade and Birdie to do paintings for them. I wish I could say that I really enjoy painting, but the truth is, I get nervous when I paint. I guess I'm afraid it won't turn out well. I need to get over that and start painting again. When I finish this book, I hope to do so. (Post Script: In December of 2023, I did resume my painting career. You will read more about it later.)

**

From childhood, I've had a good sense of humor. It think I may have gotten it from my Uncle Bob. Bob Strickland was married to Elsie, one of dad's sisters. Bob and dad did carpentry work together. In fact, they built and operated a cabinet shop at 212 East Sloan Street in Harrisburg. The building is still there, although it has been converted into a gaming store. They also built and remodeled houses together.

Uncle Bob and Aunt Elsie would come to visit us from time to time. One day when they were visiting, Bob seemed sad. Mom asked him what was wrong. He finally said, *"Well, I just saw the most terrible thing that I've ever seen in my life happen in town today ".* Dad asked him what in the world had happened. Uncle Bob kind of choked up and said, *"I was at the gas station filling my tank, when this cute little pup came running up out of nowhere. He ran to the guy that was gassing up next to me. The guy grabbed that pup, shoved the fuel hose down its throat and turned it on!"* Instinctively, I said, "Oh no! What happened?". *Uncle Bob said, "Well, that little pup started running around in circles and yelping. After about four or five circles, it just fell over."* By this time, all of us were on the edge of our seats, but it was me who said, "Was it dead?" Uncle Bob looked at me real serious and said, "No, it just ran out of gas." And that was my uncle Bob's sense of humor. We were all so relieved that no pup had died that we all

had a good laugh over it. Especially me. After that, Uncle Bob would always have a funny joke or observation to tell me whenever he came over. And I always got a good laugh out of them.

Anyway, may be where my sense of humor came from. I sometimes make up my own jokes. Mandi likes to call them my "Corny dad jokes". I'm not as funny as my Uncle Bob was though. Here's a joke I made up and told last Christmas: *How come Frosty the Snow Man always knows when Santa is doing something behind his back??? Because he has ice (eyes) in the back of his head!* Well... I told you I'm not as funny as my Uncle Bob was! Did I tell you the one about the blind man and the inch long cigarette ashes?

***

SLEEP APNEA

In 2017, I started waking up some mornings with an aching in my chest. When it got worse, I went to see the doctor. He ordered a sleep study and I was diagnosed with sleep apnea. This basically means that you stop breathing during sleep. It turned out that the lack of oxygen to my heart was causing the chest pains. I was prescribed to wear a bi-pap machine, with a full face mask. They are very uncomfortable to wear, but it's better than having a heart attack. It helps significantly. Keep this in mind if you ever start having the same symptoms that I did. Post Script: I learned that partial face masks would work for me and switched to using those. And then I switched to a mask that only covers the nose. Also, there is now a surgical procedure called Inspire that claims to correct sleep apnea without having to wear a mask. You might want to look into that, as wearing a mask is not a pleasant experience!

TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE

I experienced my first total solar eclipse in August of 2017. Our granddaughter Baleigh and her boyfriend came by to watch the great event with us. Dora was also there. We sat up lawn chairs in our front yard and watched as the sunlight slowly faded away. It was an eerie experience. Totality lasted only a couple of minutes, but it was pretty spectacular. The birds in our woods all stopped chirping. I suppose they thought it was time to go to roost. The darkness wasn't total, but it still got dark enough that some planets and bright stars were visible. I would describe the amount of darkness as about what you would experience if you were to go outside on a night with a full moon. I spent too much time

videotaping the event and missed out on some of the actual experience. If you ever get to see a total solar eclipse, I suggest you don't spend your time videotaping it. Just enjoy the moment. There will be plenty of other videos you can watch online. Oddly enough, there will be another total solar ellipse in Southern Illinois on April 8, 2024. It's very rare that two total solar eclipses occur this close together in the same location.

Have you ever wondered how astronomers calculate the occurrence of a total eclipse so far in advance? I don't exactly know, but people have been doing it for thousands of years. In fact, some ancient astronomers used this ability to their great advantage. They would tell the common people that they were "gods". To "prove it", they told the people that they would cause the sun to be blotted out on a specific day. When the darkness occurred as predicted, the commoners fell down on their knees and worshiped the astronomers. Needless to say, they would be given anything they asked for. In the course of history, many evil things have been done in the name of religion. We can be sure that God is not pleased with those who misrepresent him in order to gain wealth, fame and power for themselves or for their own kingdoms.

**

MYSTERIOUS EVENTS

Mysterious events do happen. I have related some to you in this book. Most of these events can be explained by natural phenomena. The vast majority of UFO sightings fall into this category. One evening, when we were living in Evansville, our neighbor lady came banging on our door. She was terrified. "There's a flying saucer out here!", she said. We ran outside with her, anxious to see this flying saucer. Her husband was out there too. She pointed to a bright object in the sky and said. "See! There it is!" I watched it for a few seconds and said, "I think that is the planet Venus." She said, "NO! My husband said he saw things flying in and out from it." I watched a while longer and became more and more convinced that this was only a planet. Then, it suddenly disappeared! The neighbor said, "See, I told you! It just disappeared!" When I told her that it had only gone behind a cloud, she sort of deflated. We watched as the cloud passed, and Venus reappeared. Finally, after several minutes of watching the planet Venus do nothing at all except hang there in the sky, our neighbors came to the conclusion that I was right. This just shows you how easily people can be fooled... or can fool themselves.

But some events can only be explained as supernatural. I will relate to you a few more incidents that have happened to people I know and trust.

1) Birdie was laying on our couch at Barrett Lane one evening when a bouquet of flowers appeared about 10 feet in front of her. The bouquet wasn't upright. It was as if someone was pointing the flowers in her direction. It was an arrangement of dried flowers and the colors were pale. These were not bright, living flowers. Birdie wanted to be sure she wasn't imagining this. She told herself, "I'm awake, and this is really happening." She closed her eyes and then looked again. The flowers were still moving toward her. But before they reached her, they faded away. She said there was no fear involved at all. In interviewing her for this book, I asked if she could recall any deaths in the family that occurred around that time. She could not.

2) We used to have a four wheeler that our grandkids loved to ride around on in the field near our woods. One day Jade was hauling her friend Kelsey around behind her. They rode for quite a while. When they stopped for a break, Kelsey asked Jade, "Who was that man watching from the woods?" Jade hadn't seen anyone. She asked Kelsey to describe him. Kelsey described the man. Her description fit my dad, down to the overalls, quilted brown jacked and cap that he so often would wear. But dad had died many years before.

3) My son-in-law, Wade, had a vivid dream one night shortly after Tristan was born. In the dream, my dad and Wade were standing over Tristan, who was asleep in his crib. In the dream, dad patted Wade on the back and said, "Good job Wade." The dream woke Wade up. He got up and went to Tristan's crib. Tristan was laying there, sleeping peacefully. He was positioned exactly as he had been in the dream. This was also after dad had passed.

4) As a child, Tristan suffered with breathing issues. Sometimes, he had to use an inhaler to help him breath. He was having a severe attack one day and couldn't find his inhaler. As he was struggling to breath, he heard a voice say, "On the stairs, under the fedora". He struggled to the stairs and sure enough, there was a fedora laying on one of the steps. He lifted the fedora and there was his inhaler. It was the Lord who had spoken to Tristan. Isn't it great that God is watching us? He is watching you, as you read this.

INFINITY AND ETERNITY

Two of the most incomprehensible words in the English language are eternity and infinity. We have no actual experience with either of these concepts.

We live in a world of beginnings and endings. Our lives on Earth begin at birth and end at death. Each day begins and ends. A vacation begins and, unfortunately, ends. And so it is with everything we experience. On the other hand, eternity had no beginning, and it has no end. The Bible describes eternity as forever and ever. What about infinity? We live in a big universe. But is it infinitely big? Science tells us that the universe is still expanding... but expanding into what? These are questions of eternity and infinity. This is the realm of God.

According to scientists, our universe did have a beginning. It began some 13.8 billion years ago when an infinitely small "space" exploded and began expanding. What was inside that infinitely small space, and who or what caused it explode? Science can't answer these questions. The laws of physics break down at the beginning. However, the Bible reveals that God created the universe. We don't understand how. It becomes a matter of faith. Hebrews 11:3 tells us, "By faith we understand that the universe was created by the Word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible." (ESV).

God spoke the universe into existence. When God speaks, His words unleash powers that we can't comprehend. He must have to be very careful about what He says! In the Gospel of John, we learn that the Word of God came to earth in the form Jesus Christ. John 1:10 says, "He came into the very world He created, but the world didn't recognize Him." John 1:14 tells us, "So the Word became human, and made His home among us." (NLT).

Even though our universe had a beginning, God did not. Can you imagine a time when there was NOTHING? Even as a child, I sometimes wondered, "Why is there something, instead of nothing?" Something doesn't come from nothing. There must have always been something. That may actually be a pretty good description of eternity. There has never been, and never will be, "nothing".

God actually exists outside of time. There's a scripture that sheds some light on this difficult concept. 2 Peter 3:8 says, "But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day." (NLT)

Let's look a little more closely at the concept of time. Albert Einstein's Theory of Relativity has confirmed that time stands still at the speed of light. Maybe I can put this in terms that are a little easier to understand. Suppose you are looking at a clock on a bell tower. What you are actually seeing is light being reflected off the clock. (If you don't believe this, try looking at an un-illuminated clock in the pitch dark!) The light reflected from the clock is traveling away from it at 286,000 miles per second!

Now, suppose you were somehow able to travel along with the reflected light. As long as you are following along with it, (and supposing you could see that far), you will always see the same time reflected from the clock. From this perspective, time will really and truly have stopped.

Scientist have verified that time stops at the speed of light. By using atomic clocks, they have shown that the faster an object travels, the slower time passes for it. We don't experience this in our everyday lives, because we move too slowly. With this in mind, it is very interesting to consider the following scripture. 1 John 1:5 "This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in Him at all." (NLT). This association of God with light is remarkable! God does indeed live outside of space and time. God is eternal, and so is existence.

***

BRIAR LYNN SMITH IS BORN

Another little miracle came our way on December 29th, 2018. Our eldest granddaughter, Jade gave birth to our first great-grandchild, Briar Lynn Smith. What a special little girl! She is very bright. At the age of 3, she was properly identifying different species of dinosaurs. One of them was a five syllable word, and she could pronounce it correctly!

Soon after Briar's birth, Jade had to return to work. My personal thoughts on this are that any mom should be allowed to stay at home and raise her children... at least until they reach school age. That was what Birdie and I did with our two kids. Unfortunately, times have changed for the worse. These days it often takes two incomes just to keep a roof over the family's head. To help out, Birdie and I have volunteered to keep Briar one day a week. What a blessing that has been! She truly is a bright spot in our lives. She recently sang us a song titled, "The four stages of Metamorphosis"! Shortly after Briar turned 3, I put together a 40 page hardcover book highlighting the first years of her life. I've also written a song for her, which you will read about later in the book.

MOM WENT TO BE WITH JESUS

In January of 2019, mom had been in the nursing home for over three years. She started failing fast in the last few months. I suggested to my brother and sister that we should contact Hospice. At first, my brother didn't want to, but soon thereafter he and Pat agreed that it would be for

the best. Hospice is a wonderful organization. I recommend them highly to anyone.

January 13th was my last day to spend time with mom. She was not doing well. For some reason, I took a picture of her. It turned out to be her last. She died the next day, before my sister arrived for her regular visit. Mom had said several times that she didn't know why she couldn't just go ahead and die. She wanted to go be with Jesus. She is with Him now. She is with dad too. She never got to see Briar, but one day she will. Mom was 96.

2,250,000,000

Two billion, two hundred and fifty million. That's about how many times the human heart beats in an average lifetime. In 2019, I developed an irregular heartbeat. I don't know if my sleep apnea had anything to do with it, but my heart would stop beating for two or three beats at a time. That will get your attention fast! This started happening more and more frequently as time went on. Finally, I went to see a heart doctor. Doctor Lee said that my condition wasn't life threatening. Still, he gave me the option of having a surgical procedure that would almost certainly restore my heartbeat to normal. The skipped beats were bothering me, so I chose to have what is known as ablation surgery.

The operation involved inserting an electrode through a vein in my leg and into my heart. The surgery required that I stay awake the entire time, so that the surgeon could ask me questions. When they strapped both of my arms down for surgery, I was beginning to wonder if I had made a bad decision. But there was no pain involved, and the surgeon was able to locate the area in my heart that was causing the problem. When he applied electrical shocks to the area, the results were immediate. The skipped beats stopped! That was about five years ago and, thank the Lord, my heart is still beating properly. I ran some calculations and, as noted above, an average persons heart will beat well over 2 BILLION times before they die. God is an amazing engineer!

I now have yearly heart checkups. On my last visit, I told my doctor that I had been walking about three quarters of a mile daily on my elliptical exercise machine. He suggested that I undertake to get my heart rate up to around 110 beats per minute and keep it there for 30 minutes, five days every week. That would be good advice for anyone.

DORA'S DEATH

Birdie's mom was now in her mid 80's. Due to declining health, she was now living at Brookstone Estates in Harrisburg. Brookstone is a wonderful assisted living facility. I could recommend it to anyone. Dora's health gradually got worse though, to the point that she could no longer remain in assisted living. She had designated Birdie to be her Power of Attorney. Birdie consulted the rest of the family, and they decided to move Dora to Shawnee Rose nursing home, located on West Sloan Street in Harrisburg. She was there for about a year when she developed a severe blood infection due to a cut on her heal. She was transferred to Carbondale Memorial Hospital, where she passed away on March 19, 2020. I've already mentioned this earlier in the book, but it bears repeating that Dora was a Godly woman, who prayed faithfully for her family. That includes me. Dora is buried in Sunset Gardens Cemetery, next to her husband, John. Our burial plots are adjacent to theirs. In one sense, Dora was lucky. She escaped having to be isolated from her family when the COVID pandemic hit only days after her death.

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In the first months of 2020, we heard the first rumblings of COVID-19. COVID is short for Corona Virus Disease. The 19 represents the year the virus originated, 2019. Many people believe COVID-19 was released from a Chinese lab that was conducting "Gain of Function" research. Living organisms can gain new functions. This can happen naturally, via random gene mutation, but it can also be done deliberately, in a lab. The COVID-19 virus undeniably originated in Wuhan, China. China claims that it originated, from bats sold in the open market in China, as a food source. As of this writing, there have been over 773 million cases of COVID worldwide. Nearly 7 million of those cases have been fatal, including our Brother-in-law, Kenny. *Addendum: As of 2025, it is almost certain that the virus came from a lab.*

COVID symptoms can range anywhere from very light to deadly, depending on the health and age of the person contracting the virus. When COVID first hit the United States, I was 69 years old and a diabetic. Plus, I had worked in the coal mines for nearly 23 years. Birdie was 65, with a history of lung disease in her family. So we both were naturally alarmed. We didn't want to expose ourselves to the COVID virus. Birdie gave up her job as a school bus monitor, and we both became virtual hermits in our home for about a year. It was terrible! The worst part of all was that we could no longer be around our family, including Briar. Of course, we had already fallen in love with this delightful little girl. Now we could only see her through windows and glass doors. She was too young

to understand, and she would try to get to us. It was heart breaking for all of us to have to deal with. This began in March of 2020.

Mandi delivered groceries to us for a while, until Wal-Mart started offering online grocery shopping with outdoor, contactless order pickup. This is how we bought our groceries for nearly a year. We avoided human contact almost completely. If we did have to get out, we tried to maintain at least 6 feet of distance between ourselves and others, and we wore masks.

Jade would bring Briar over so we could visit through the front door. They would stay on the outside and we would stay on the inside. As time went on, we were missing our family more and more. One day, we decided to go visit Jade and Briar through their window. But they were outside when we got there and Briar came bounding up to me with her arms outstretched. I could stand it no longer! I grabbed her up and gave her a big hug. What a great day that was!

While COVID was rampant, I came under heavy conviction for the third time in my life. God's convicting Spirit is almost unbearable. You have to do something about it. I wasn't living right, and I knew it. God had tried to nudge me gently, but I refused to listen. He gradually applied more and more pressure. Things would happen that I knew were God's doing. They were designed to turn me back around. When I refused to respond, He eventually sent severe conviction. This is biblical. Hebrews 12:5-8 makes it abundantly clear when it says, "My child, don't make light of the Lord's discipline, and don't give up when He corrects you. For the Lord disciplines those He loves, and he punishes each one He accepts as His child. As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as His own children. Who has ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? If God doesn't discipline you as He does all of His children, it means you are illegitimate and are not really His children." (NLT)

As I have already mentioned, God has spoken to me directly only on rare occasions. Of course, He speaks to us through His word every time we read it, but I'm talking about hearing a voice inside my head. It's like having a thought that doesn't originate with you, yet there it is! I knew the second I came under conviction that I would have to do something. COVID was raging, but I felt compelled to go to church. Oasis church in Harrisburg was having parking lot services, so I told Birdie we needed to go, and she agreed.

The next Sunday morning, August 20th, 2020 I was awaked by a voice. It was in my head, but it seemed to be coming from the foot of my bed. God simply called my name, "Buddy". He was telling me that it was time

to get up and go to church. So we did. And we continued going each Sunday morning until the outside services were moved back inside.

One night I stayed on my knees beside my bed for most of the night. I turned things over to God the best I knew how. I never "felt" a breakthrough, but things began to change. Then God spoke to me again. He said, "You were sleeping in darkness." I felt this was a very kind thing for Him to say. He didn't scold me, He just forgave me and set me back on the right path. What I couldn't, or wouldn't do for myself, He did for me. **All praise to our loving, kind, forgiving Heavenly Father!**

COVID-19 could be a harbinger of things to come. The bible warns us that a great worldwide catastrophe will one day take place on this Earth. It will result in the death of over 50% of Earth's population. Could gain of function research produce an even more lethal variation of COVID, or something far worse, that will wipe out billions of lives? Absolutely! That time in Earth's future is referred to by Jesus in Matthew 24:29 as the time of great tribulation. The book of Revelation gives us further details. Much of it is written in symbolic language, but the book of Revelation makes it clear that death and destruction will occur on a worldwide scale. This is the same period that I mentioned earlier in the book, when people will be required to take a mark on their right hand or their forehead in order to buy or sell food and goods. As I said then, I say again: Should you live through this tribulation period, do not accept this "Mark of the Beast" (Revelations 19:20).

I started having involuntary muscle spasms around this time. I tried to ignore them, but they kept getting worse. I prayed about it. One day God spoke again. He said, "Eat half a banana". I thought that was strange, but I started eating half a banana on a regular basis. I don't know if it was the potassium or something else in the bananas, but the involuntary muscle spasms soon went away. One day I was wondering, "Why did God say to eat HALF a banana"? So I did some research, and I learned that half a banana is the recommended serving for a diabetic. A whole banana has too many carbohydrates in it!

On another occasion, I "heard" these words: "The seventeenth book of the New Testament". I didn't know which book that was, so I started counting and discovered that it was the book of Titus. I've read Titus through several time, in several different translations, but I still don't know exactly what the significance is for me. I hope the Lord will tell me more one day.*

*UPDATE: I am blessed to report that on 10/29/23 I was listening to the Oasis Community Church of the Nazarene live stream broadcast, and the associate pastor read the following scripture from the book of Titus. "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching

us that having denied the ungodliness of worldly lusts, we should live discreetly, righteously and godly, in this present world." (Titus 2:11 & 12 MKJV)

In September of 2020, I heard the words, "Get out the good news" in a dream. This sounded to me like a song title, so I used the words to write a new song. It was the first song I'd written in a very long time. I wouldn't rank it among my better songs.

#134 Get Out The Good News

So many people are running around with their heads hung low. Don't really know life's meaning. Don't know which way to go. They need to hear the Good News. Let all the people know that Jesus is the answer. Let all creation know. (Ch) Get out the Good News! Get out the Good News! Good News we can use. Get out the Good News! (Vs) A lost and lonely world is seeking for answers. Answers only found in Jesus, the Master. Faith only comes by hearing. Yes, hearing the Good News. The Gospel is the Good News. It's Good news we can use. (Ch)

In December of 2020, COVID-19 was still raging. Birdie's sister, Vickie, and her husband Kenny had made the choice to continue working. Kenny was 77 years old, a diabetic and an ex-coal miner. Thirty years of breathing coal dust had compromised his lungs. So, he already had strikes against him. Kenny was a school bus driver, and Vickie worked in the Library at Harrisburg's East Side School. Their daughter Crystal was home schooling her two boys. She and her husband were building a house at that time, so they were living with Vickie and Kenny until their house was completed.

Someone in the household brought in the COVID virus and all six family members became infected. Vickie and Kenny being the oldest, had the worst cases. About a week into his illness, Kenny woke up one night saying that he couldn't breathe. Vickie rushed him to Eldorado Hospital. Eldorado told him he needed to get to Deaconess Hospital in Evansville. The life flight helicopter was grounded due to bad weather, so they transported him by ambulance. Vickie followed in the car. When they arrived at the hospital, Vickie wasn't given the opportunity to approach Kenny, so she yelled to him that he was going to be all right. She said Kenny looked at her, shook his head and ran his finger across his throat as if to say, "No, I'm not going to make it."

Vickie sat in her car at that hospital for almost two weeks. She wasn't allowed to see Kenny due to COVID restrictions, but she could see his third floor window from the parking lot where she had parked. Kenny was bedfast the entire time. Birdie and I spent many days and nights in that

parking lot with her. We conversed with her by phone. It was a horrible two weeks. Then, the doctors told us that Kenny wasn't going to survive. He passed shortly after that. They allowed Vickie to be in the room when they removed his ventilator. He only took a couple of breaths after that. This was December 14, 2020. Do you remember me saying earlier in the book that Vickie saw an angel when her dad died? She saw something when Kenny died too, but she won't tell us what she saw.

As soon as the COVID inoculations became available in January of 2021, Birdie and I took them. Our son-in-law's employer insisted that he get the vaccine as well, but he refused, as a matter of principal. That nearly cost him his job. I have to admire him for being willing to risk his job and his retirement in order to stand up for what he believed. Mandi backed him up as well. He did not lose his job.

Now that Birdie and I had our shots, we began venturing out a little. I give the Lord the praise that neither one of us had contracted COVID. At this writing we have had all of our COVID shots. I don't fault anyone who chooses not to get them. As for Birdie and me, with our age and health conditions, we believe it was the right thing to do.

PSORIASIS

When I first applied for work at the Unit 3 school district back in 2002, they were requiring tuberculosis testing for all new employees. Egyptian Health in Eldorado did the testing. The nurse there informed me that my skin test was positive. Although I didn't have TB, she said I was a TB carrier. This was based on her subjective observation of skin reaction to an injection she gave me. Since I didn't actually have TB, this didn't disqualify me from working for Unit 3, but it did present me with another problem. One having to do with psoriasis.

I had been dealing with psoriasis for many years. The doctors had prescribed a variety of lotions and creams, but they were not very effective. As my psoriasis worsened, I sought out a dermatologist in Evansville, who informed me that a new treatment was available. The only catch was, a TB carrier could not take it. When I told him I had been diagnosed as a TB carrier, he didn't question it, and I didn't get the medication. So I was back to square one.

The nurse at Egyptian Health had told me back in 2002 that you can only be tested once for TB, and I had believed her. Nearly 20 years later, I discovered that she had misinformed me. Thanks to the internet, I learned that a simple blood test could confirm or contradict that I was a TB carrier.

I requested the blood test from my primary care doctor. It came back negative. I was not a TB carrier! This was in May of 2021.

When I informed my local dermatologist about the negative TB results, she prescribed Humira. Humira is a self administered shot taken twice a month. I saw almost immediate results. I am now almost completely psoriasis free. I had suffered with psoriasis needlessly for almost 20 years due to a misdiagnosis from Egyptian Health. I will add that these shots cost more than $3000 each. That's over $72,000 a year! I could never afford them if I didn't have wonderful insurance. With insurance, I only pay $5 a month. I thank God for our health insurance. How terrible it is that so many families with no insurance often go without the medicines they need because they can't afford them. Let's keep them in our prayers.

In December of 2021, I wrote the lyrics for "Briar's Lullaby". I had written the melody earlier. This was a song for our great-granddaughter, Briar Lynn. I did the vocals on this one.

#136 Briar's Lullaby

Sleep little Briar, you're safe and you're warm. Snug in your covers and safe from the storm. Jesus in heaven will keep us from harm. Troubles are drifting away. (Ch) Drifting away. Gone for today. No more to stay little Girl. Troubles are drifting away. (Vs) Sleep little Briar, the day is now through. Mommy is here. She will watch over you. Tell Big Mac night-y and Grasshopper too*. Troubles are drifting away. (Ch) (Vs) Sleep little Briar, all warm in your bed. Sleep little Briar, the doggies are fed. Kiss mommy night-y and lay down your head. Troubles are drifting away. (Ch) (Tag) Troubles are drifting away. ***Refers to Briar's pets**

Dad's World War II Book

In January of 2022, the idea came to me that I should put together a book based on my dad's war experiences. He served in the United States Army Air Force during most of World War II. Back in March of 1997, I had asked dad to sit down for a videotaped interview about his war years. After the interview, I distributed CD copies of the one hour video to several family members. I have also stored an "audio only" copy of the interview online at Archive.org. See page 6 for instructions on how to find it. The same audio is also available on Audio.com by going to the web page **audio.com/lyndell-martin. Be sure to include the dash between lyndell and martin.**

For the book, I painstakingly transcribed the videotaped interview onto paper. That transcript became the main text of the book. I then added dozens of photo's, many of which dad had brought back from his tour in Africa. Additional pictures were taken from our family photos. Pictures of some of the airplanes he worked on were taken from the internet.

Mandi, Jason and I have hardcover copies of the book. In addition, there is an electronic version of the book stored online at Archive.org. The electronic version will include some, but not all of the pictures that are in the original hardcover edition. It also contains a few small corrections from the hardcover edition. See page 6 for search details.

THE OREGON TRAIL

Mandi, our daughter, worked for several years as a lab technician at Harrisburg Medical Center in Harrisburg. Her work involved testing blood samples and tissue specimens in the lab. When COVID hit, there was a massive shortage of lab technicians throughout the country. Labs were paying astronomical wages for traveling lab technicians. Mandi decided this would be an excellent opportunity to see the country. Since Wade was close to retirement, they decided she would go ahead and put in applications. She received several calls, and settled on a 13 week contract in Washington state. Wade, and later Jade and Briar, flew out to visit her. The snow and the mountainous terrain there are all spectacular!

In March of 2022, Mandi's Washington contract expired and she took a position in Coos Bay, Oregon. Birdie and I decided to fly out for a visit. We spent two amazing weeks with her. She had rented a cozy house, high on a cliff, overlooking the coastline. The view was magnificent! We were able to explore the rugged Oregon Pacific coast for several days. We also had the opportunity to explore a Redwood forest just outside of Crescent City, California. It's remarkable how big Redwood trees get... and how long they can live. There was a section of a fallen redwood tree on display there. Inscriptions on the tree showed that it was already over 600 years old when the Pilgrims first landed at Plymouth Rock! It was still living when America became a country in 1776. When you look at it from this perspective, it's quite startling to realize how young our country actually is.

Sequoia National Park in California has even older trees. "The President" is a Sequoia tree that is about three thousand, two hundred forty years It was well over 1000 years old when Christ was born, and it is still living! "The President" is currently the oldest known living sequoia. Yet I have discovered that it is only a youngster when compared with the "Sisters Olive Trees of Noah" in Lebanon. These Olive trees are estimated to be

6,000 years old, and they still produce olives! Our trip to Oregon gave me a fresh prospective on life. Compared to the Redwoods, our lives are very short. I realized that 90% of my life is past. This epiphany set me on the path toward writing this book.

A STRANGE THOUGHT

One morning in early 2023, I woke up with a strange phrase running through my mind. It was, "The thing with no brain." I had no idea where it came from or what it meant, but I thought that I should do something with it. So, I sat down and started writing. Remember me telling you that since my youth I've had a sense of humor? Well, this is what came out.

The Thing With No Brain
By: Lyndell R Martin

Oh, I searched life in vain for the thing with no brain.
I searched high. I searched low. I looked under.
I searched when it snowed, even when the wind blowed,
and I searched through the rain and the thunder.

Oh, I searched every day as I went on life’s way,
but it seemed that I never could find it.
Oh, it drove me insane, did this thing with no brain.
Maybe someday, I’d sneak up behind it.

I searched overhead. I searched under my bed.
Oh, I searched till I started to wonder.
Am I searching in vain for this thing with no brain?
Has everything been just a blunder?

Till one day I awoke with this thought. It’s a joke.
And instantly, all became clearer.
For the thing with no brain... that once drove me insane...
was staring at me in the mirror!

GATLINBURG, TENNESSEE

In March, we took Birdie's sister to Gatlinburg, Tennessee for a week's vacation. Even though it was during the off season, the traffic was dreadful. Dollywood was not open yet, but we did see the beautiful Smokey Mountains and ate a lot of good food. We returned safely to Harrisburg, with grateful hearts and refreshed souls.

YELLOWSTONE & THE GRAND TETONS

When Mandi's Oregon contract expired, she accepted a position in West Virginia. She was not impressed with that area of the country. Her next contract was in Riverton, Wyoming. By this time, Wade had retired and was traveling with Mandi. They invited us out for a visit, so Birdie and I booked a flight. Tragically, Wade's dad passed away in Tennessee, two days before our flight was to leave. We intended to cancel our trip and go to the funeral, but Wade felt we should not cancel. We wound up heading to Wyoming while Mandi and Wade were heading to Tennessee for the funeral. Birdie and I picked up Wade's truck, which he had left for us at the Denver airport, and drove it to Riverton. We ended up driving through extensive hail and heavy rain, but the Lord saw us through it. At one point, Birdie said a prayer, and the sky in front us of just seemed to open up. There was rain on our right, rain on our left, and rain behind us, but the way ahead was gloriously bright and sunny! It was smooth sailing for us the rest of the way into Riverton! Birdie and I spent a few days alone in the nice dome style house that Mandi and Wade had rented.

Shortly after the funeral Mandi and Wade returned to Riverton, and the four of us set out to experience some amazing sights together. Wyoming is expansive and sparsely populated. You can easily drive 30 miles without seeing another car. One highlight of our trip was Yellowstone National Park, with its magnificent lakes, waterfalls, geysers, canyons and wildlife. We had to stop several times to allow buffalo to cross our paths. The Grand Teton Mountains were also spectacular. Driving back from the Tetons' one night after midnight, we stopped in "the middle of nowhere", to star gaze. It was a moonless night. The thin atmosphere, together with no manmade lights, made for an amazing sight. There were thousands of stars visible, along with the planets. You haven't experienced the night sky as it really is until you've experience it the way we did that night in Wyoming, in July of 2023.

Wade, by the way, has become a master craftsman when it comes to making knives from wood and metal. While in Wyoming, he guided me through the multi-step process of making a hunting knife and sheath for our grandson, Keenan. It was a lot of hard work, but the results were far better than I had imagined. Knifing tradition is that the maker gets to name the knife. Since we had visited the pristine "Lake Jenny" in Yellowstone National Park, I named her Jenny. I'll include a picture in the appendix.

TRIGGER

I mentioned earlier in the book that Jade's "horse of a lifetime", Trigger, a Haflinger, had lost an eye to cancer. In August of 2023, he died. It wasn't from cancer though. He had somehow ingested a large quantity of sand at Darnel's Stables in Galatia, where Jade stabled him. At the time, Jade worked for Beasley's Equine Center in Eldorado. Their vet did everything he could to save Trigger, but the sand was tearing his intestines apart, and they had to put him down. We have a pet cemetery just west of our house, and Trigger in buried there. He truly was the horse of a lifetime! When Briar comes to visit, she often pucks a flower and puts it on Trigger's grave. It's a touching sight to see. I hope to make a video in tribute to Trigger.

Not long after Trigger died, Jade left her job at Beasley's Equine Center and began grooming dogs at Stiltmore Kennels in Eldorado. She has built up a good cliental there.

MISSOURI AND THE OZARKS

As of this writing, Mandi is working at a lab in Salem, Missouri. She and Wade are renting in nearby St. James. For now, they are within driving distance for us. We just recently made the 250 mile drive to visit them. We all decided to visit Branson, Missouri for a couple of days. We saw "Legends In Concert", at the Dick Clark Theater. They have several entertainers, who give tribute to music legends. They feature big name artists like Elvis Presley, Elton John, Michael Jackson and Alan Jackson. The show was pricy, but fabulous. I would recommend it, if you're ever in Branson. I'm sure the legends will have changed by the time you read this. Also, go to the "Sights and Sounds Theater" in Branson. They put on world class theatricals, all of which have a biblical theme.

We also spent part of a day at Top of The Rock, which is a remarkable facility near Branson, built by Johnny Morris, the owner of Bass Pro Shops. He is a billionaire 8 times over and whatever he does, he does top notch. There is an underground museum, a golf course, and a lakefront chapel that looks like it came off the cover of a magazine. You can also take extended tours through the surrounding forest in golf carts that you drive yourself. These will take you through a cave, past waterfalls and through beautiful forest and lake areas.

When we left Top of The Rock, we drove to Springfield, Missouri to tour the National Headquarters of Bass Pro Shop. You don't have to be a sportsman to appreciate this place. You can spend an entire day there and not see everything. It includes a wildlife museum as well as a world class aquarium. They sell everything related to sports, and Johnny Morris

has an unsurpassed collection of American memorabilia spread throughout the facility.

WAR BREAKS OUT IN THE HOLY LAND

As my memoir nears completion, war has erupted in Israel, and it threatens to spread throughout the Middle East. On October 7th, 2023, Islamic terrorists from the state of Palestine invaded Israel. The terrorists attacked at dawn, killing, maiming, kidnapping and torturing innocent men, women and children. The tortures involved unspeakable evil. Many of the horrifying acts were videotaped by the terrorists themselves. You can find gruesome details on the internet, but I advise caution. I will relate two incidents here because we must never forget how God's chosen people, the Jews, are under continuous persecution by the forces of evil. You might choose to skip over the remainder of this paragraph. The accounts are horrific. The terrorists put a baby in an oven and baked it alive while making the mother listen to the child scream until it died. They then raped and killed the mother. They beheaded a man using a garden hoe. The terrorists also took captive over 240 men, women, children and babies, carrying them back into Palestine. At this writing, the majority of them are still being held as hostages. They range in age from 10 months to 85 years.

We do not presently know how this war will end. Israel has stated that it will not stop until those responsible for the atrocities have been eliminated. Innocent civilians on both sides of this war have been caught in the middle. Meanwhile, Iranian backed forces are provoking the United States by launching attacks on our military bases in neighboring countries. Could this be the start of one of the end time wars mentioned in the book of Revelations? We don't know. It is a precarious time to be alive. But God's children should not fear.

The Jewish people have been under persecution for thousands of years. Their forced slavery in Egypt, circa 2000 BC, is an early example. The holocaust of World War II is a modern example. Hitler's Germany declared war on the Jews, herding them into concentration camps and slaughtering them by the millions. It is estimated that more than six million Jews were murdered during World War II. Refer to JewishVirtualLibrary.org, for additional information.

Why are the Jewish people so heavily persecuted? Satan hates them, because they are God's chosen people. Anti-Semitism in its many forms can be traced to this root cause. Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. Mary was herself a Jew. But God will have the last word.

A PAINTING FOR JADE

On December 15, 2023, after a three and one half year hiatus, I resumed my painting career. I hadn't painted since May of 2020. I did a mountain painting for Jade. She had asked me some time ago to do this, and I decided it would make the perfect Christmas gift. I have included a picture of it in the appendix.

NORTH TO ALASKA

We've just learned that Mandi has interviewed for a Lab Technician job in Sitka, Alaska. If she gets the job we will, Lord willing, be spending some time in Alaska with them. One more item to be marked off our bucket list! *Update*: Mandi just called and told us that she got the position in Alaska. Her and Wade will be there from January 9th through at least April 27th of 2024, if it be the Lord's will. We have high hopes of spending some time in Alaska with them. *Update 2*: We were blessed to be able to make the trip to Alaska. I must say it is one of the most beautiful places we have ever visited.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

I had a few purposes in mind while writing my memoir. Most importantly, I have attempted to pass along my faith in God. God has always been watching over me. He is watching over you too, as you read these closing thoughts. My best advice is, Follow Jesus. Even when you see no evidence that God is near... even when you don't understand why you are going through difficult times, trust in Him. As Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."

Additionally, I wanted to pass along to you some of the things I've learned along life's way. A wise person will learn from their mistakes. A even wiser person will learn from the mistakes of others, and avoid making the same mistakes themselves. I've shared some of my mistakes in this book, in hopes that you will learn from them, and not repeat them.

With God's help, I've also done a few thing right in my journey. I've attempted to share some of those with you as well. Some of the advice I've included in this book can help you financially. Some of it can save you

a few heartaches. I hope you will consider the advice carefully and put it to good use whenever and wherever you can.

Finally, I wanted my descendants to have a record of some of my most memorable life experiences. Of course, music is highest on the list, as it has been my calling in life from God. We all have a calling in life. I was blessed to be able to apply mine through music, with the songs I've written. Discover your calling from God, and use it to further His cause and His kingdom. If you're not sure what your calling is, ask Him. You may not hear a tangible voice, but God will lead you in the right direction. It's your responsibility to follow. Learn to trust God, and become a Godly person. That's one of the main reasons you are here.

I'm sure you noticed that, in reporting the births of all our children and grandchildren, I referred to every one of them as special. That's because we are all made in the image of God! We are all special to God. YOU are special to God! Never forget that.

In closing, I would like to thank you for taking the time to read my memoir. I hope this book will inspire you to write your own. It hasn't been an easy task, but it has been a fulfilling one. One that was well worth the effort. GOD BLESS YOU!

ADDENDUMS NOTE

I anticipate there will be addendums to this book. All addendums will be listed in appendix G. The hard cover version, should one become available, will also include some addendums, though likely not as many as the electronic version. The book has become larger than I had anticipated, but there are still, God willing, a few more adventures ahead.

~

Appendix A
100 Songs
(Best First)

BEST FIRST	SONG #	SONG TITLE	DATE WRITTEN
1	101	GOD LOVES MERCY	March 1, 1996
2	94	I TALKED TO AN ANGEL	January 1, 1995
3	67	CHRISTMAS LAMB, THE	November 1, 1988
4	115	BLUE HILLS OF HEAVEN, THE	August 11, 2006
5	64	BE ABOUT THE MASTERS BUSINESS	October 9, 1988
6	118	BETTER MAN, A	June 1, 2010
7	102	WHY DON'T YOU TALK TO ME	April 1, 1996
8	120	QUITE A LOVELY DAY (For Birdie)	July 11, 2010
9	59	BACK PORCH SWING	June 5, 1988
10	109	CHRISTMAS ISN'T CHRISTMAS WITHOUT YOU	June 22, 1997
11	44	PASS IT ON (Title suggested by my dad)	February 1, 1987
12	117	ROUGH EDGES	April 21, 2009
13	5	NOAH'S ARK	June 10, 1981
14	99	ON DADDY'S KNEE	July 4, 1995
15	53	WHAT A WONDERFUL LIFE OVER THERE	April 23, 1988
16	23	HE KNOWS YOUR NAME	November 12, 1982

17	71	YOU CAN'T FOOL GOD	April 15, 1989
18	127	SANTA'S REINDEER FLY	December 3, 2011
19	114	CHRISTMAS IS A MAGIC TIME OF YEAR	November 24, 2003
20	13	OUR GOD IS ABLE	January 1, 1982
21	24	JOY OF LIVING, THE	December 1, 1982
22	89	WHILE WE HAVE THIS TIME TOGETHER	January 27, 1994
23	90	OH, FOR THE LOVE OF JESUS!	February 4, 1994
24	116	EXCELLENT IS THY NAME IN ALL THE EARTH	August 1, 2008
25	136	BRIAR'S LULLABY (For Briar)	December 1, 2021
26	119	SEMI RIDER	July 1, 2010
27	58	HE HOLDS TOMORROW	June 4, 1988
28	129	LOVE CAN LAST FOREVER	November 1, 2013
29	83	I M COMING HOME	February 1, 1993
30	79	WHAT A DAY	September 1, 1991
31	51	MY SONG COMES FROM YOU LORD	April 1, 1988
32	111	JADE'S SONG (For Jade)	June 24, 1997
33	105	WE FACE THE STORMS TOGETHER (For Jason)	July 2, 1996
34	91	GOOD NEWS!	February 16, 1994
35	125	OUR FAVORITE SONG	February 27, 2011
36	96	PASSING YEARS, THE	July 1, 1995
37	88	STORY OF THE SAVIOR'S LOVE, THE	October 1, 1993
38	103	BEYOND THE SKY (For Dad & Mom)	May 1, 1996
39	93	A HAPPY MELODY	September 5, 1994
40	113	BEHOLD THE SPARROW	February 23, 2003
BEST FIRST	**SONG #**	**SONG TITLE**	**DATE WRITTEN**
41	8	COME TO JESUS	August 21, 1981
42	60	I'LL MAKE A WAY WHEN THERE IS NONE (For Dora)	July 21, 1988
43	75	IT'S HARVEST TIME	November 1, 1989
44	46	BLESSINGS TO NAME	February 1, 1988
45	70	JESUS IS CALLING AGAIN	February 11, 1989
46	41	I'VE GOT THE SON IN MY EYES	October 1, 1985

47	104	ONE CHANCE	July 1, 1996
48	80	LORD, IT'S ME AGAIN	February 23, 1992
49	74	SOMEDAY (SOME WONDERFUL DAY)	October 23, 1989
50	1	SAVIOR IS LOVE, THE	March 1, 1981
51	108	THANK GOD I'VE BEEN REDEEMED	February 24, 1997
52	92	THERE WILL NEVER BE ANOTHER YOU (For Birdie)	July 1, 1994
53	121	JALYN HAVE A LOVELY LIFE (For Jalyn)	November 13, 2010
54	69	WHERE THE HEART SHALL WEEP NO MORE	February 8, 1989
55	77	HIS LOVE	April 14, 1991
56	19	WE'RE GOING OVER	September 1, 1982
57	45	NEW BEGINNINGS	January 1, 1988
58	112	BEAUTIFUL BALEIGH (For Baleigh)	June 1, 2000
59	49	YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU	March 15, 1988
60	95	GOSPEL ROAD STILL LEADS ME ON, THE	May 21, 1995
61	87	PLACE BEYOND THE PAIN, A	September 1, 1993
62	100	HEAVENLY HIGHWAYS	October 1, 1995
63	62	I'M ON THE GOSPEL ROAD	October 2, 1988
64	39	JOY IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD	April 1, 1985
65	54	MAKE YOUR RESERVATION	May 1, 1988
66	78	LOOK AT CALVARY	August 19, 1991
67	48	GIFT OF LIFE, THE	March 2, 1988
68	30	HAPPY WE WILL BE	November 10, 1983
69	61	GOOD OLD DAYS, THE	September 1, 1988
70	34	MORE LIKE YOU	May 1, 1984
71	72	BY THE POWER OF HIS HAND	June 12, 1989
72	35	LITTLE CHILDREN (For Mandi & Jason)	June 12, 1984
73	12	COME ALONG WITH ME	December 27, 1981
74	27	I WANT TO FOLLOW JESUS	June 1, 1983
75	55	WHY WOULD YOU WALK ALONE	June 1, 1988
76	26	YOU WILL LOVE EVERYBODY	May 1, 1983
77	84	WOMBLE MOUNTAIN	February 2, 1993
78	98	WE RE IN LOVE (For Mandi & Wade)	July 3, 1995
79	81	THIS IS THE DAY THAT JESUS HAS MADE	April 9, 1992
80	14	BECAUSE HE CARED	February 1, 1982
BEST FIRST	**SONG #**	**SONG TITLE**	**DATE WRITTEN**

81	37	I'VE STAKED MY CLAIM	January 1, 1985
82	106	WALK TOWARD THE LIGHT	July 3, 1996
83	107	WE'RE ON OUR WAY	November 1, 1996
84	52	WHERE HAVE THEY GONE	April 22, 1988
85	26	YOU WILL LOVE EVERYBODY	May 1, 1983
86	82	NEW CHURCH, THE	November 1, 1992
87	134	GET OUT THE GOOD NEWS	September 1, 2020
88	63	ONE OF THESE DAYS	October 5, 1988
89	9	IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE	September 1, 1981
90	25	WHAT LIGHT IS BRIGHTER	February 24, 1983
91	18	NEW JERUSALEM	June 14, 1982
92	76	JESUS IS RISEN	May 1, 1990
93	110	I LOVE JESUS	June 23, 1997
94	38	HALLELUJAH CHOIR, THE	February 1, 1985
95	7	YOU SHOULD HAVE HEARD US SHOUTING	August 1, 1981
96	17	IN GODS ARMS	June 8, 1982
97	65	PEACE LIKE A RIVER	October 12, 1988
98	42	WHO DID HE DIE FOR	May 2, 1986
99	10	WHY WON'T THE PEOPLE BE SAVED	October 1, 1981
100	15	STRANGEST DREAM, THE	March 15, 1982

Appendix B
Poems And Writings

I Went To Cut A Tree

© 1984
By: Lyndell R. Martin

I went to cut a tree today. A strapping one I found.
A hundred-twenty feet I said, from top, unto the ground.
I've come to cut a tree I said, and raised my ax, full swing.
And looking up, I saw a bird had come to sit, and sing.

I've come to cut a tree I said. I mustn't tarry longer. And then
I thought, t'wixt she and I, which one would be the stronger?
For she has been here many years, and I but just a few.
And when I'm gone, she will remain, unless I cut her through.

I've come to cut a tree I said, and raised my ax again.
And looking down, I saw a seed had taken root and stem.
This tree has born a child I said, and what if it should die?
If I should cut the mother down, how will it's young survive?

Oh, how absurd, I told myself. I've come to cut a tree.
And if it's young should also die, then what is that to me?
For I must have this wood today, to keep my children warm.
And build a house to keep them in, protected from the storm.

And so I raised my ax to cut, and felt a drop of rain.
It matters not, I told myself, and raised my ax again.
But lightening bolted from the sky, and struck my friend, the tree.
How odd, I thought. I meant her harm, yet she protected me.

And so I laid my ax aside, and bowed my head in shame.
Forgive me lord, I said to God, for I accept the blame.
This tree you made so long ago, would never have to die,
were it not for the earthly needs of sinners such as I.

You made the earth, and all within, for benefit of man.
We saw, we touched, we ate the fruit.
And then the curse began.

The Starry Night

© 1985
BY: Lyndell R Martin

One night I went for a walk, just to be alone with God. As I stepped out under the starry sky, it seemed as if ten million bright diamonds were shining all around me. I stopped and asked the lord why He had put so many stars in his firmament. Were they there to be a guiding light to those who walked in the night?

Just then, a still small voice seemed to speak to me, and God said: "My son, you may use these stars as a guide in the nighttime, for I desire that my children make use of all things that I have created for their good. But you see, these stars are much more than that. For each star that you see in the sky represents a mansion that I have built for one of my children. And there are so many of them, my child, because I have prepared a mansion for every soul that has ever lived, or ever shall live on the Earth."

Then God said, "Behold!" And I saw a star fall from the sky. I said, "But Father, if these stars are mansions, why did this mansion fall? " And God said, "Though I have prepared each one with great love and care, many people will not accept the mansion I have prepared for them. The star you saw falling represents one of these souls that has refused to enter into my kingdom."

Tears began to fill my eyes. Then God said, "Be of good cheer my son, for I have chosen you to be a worker in my vineyard. And you shall lead many sons into my kingdom. Truly the fields are white to harvest today, as they have never been since the beginning of time. Therefore, do not delay, but go, and do the work which I have set before you. And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Musical Exhortation:
Whenever I see a falling star, it nearly breaks my heart.
It makes me more determined, to go and do my part.
Whenever I see a shining star, still hanging in the sky,
I have to stop and thank the lord, for one of them is mine.

The IF Poems

If Wide Was Tall

if wide was tall and tall was wide,
the world would lay upon its side.
And mountains could be quickly climbed.
Yes, conquered in a moments time.

If tall was wide and wide was tall
the short men wouldn't mind at all.
For they would look down, smug and grim,
at tall men looking up at them.

But wide is wide, and tall is tall
just as it should be, after all.
For if the mountains could be climbed
without discomfort, we would find

each task to quickly would be met.
And then, I fear, we would forget
that we are merely mortal man.
All held within the master's hand.

And if no mountains came to you
you'd never reach their lovely view.
So climb your mountains with a smile
for God is with you, all the while.

~

If White Was Black

If white was black and black was white
the white men wouldn't think it right
to look upon the black's with hate
for this would now become *their* fate.

And black men all across the land
would think that it was really grand
to see the white men all turned down
for job's they once so quickly found.
And back seats on the buses then

might soon be filled with all white men.
And so I think it best if we
were all one big minority.

~

If Bad Was Good

If bad was good and good was bad,
our time on earth would be so sad.
For parents would not think it wrong,
to slay their child before it's born.

And gangs in streets would think it right
to slay each other in the night.
For they would feel there's nothing wrong
with killing those who don't belong.

And sad would be our epitaph
If one small child should starve to death.
And did so while the world looked on.
And felt we had done nothing wrong.

If good was bad and bad was good
I think that it is understood
that husbands would betray their trust
and leave their wives, because of lust.

And watch their daughters start to roam
the streets for love, not found at home.
And care not where they spent the night.
If right was wrong, and wrong was right.

To see a man lay still and dead
no more would fill our hearts with dread.
And sex outside the marriage vows
would seem to be ok, somehow.

Our TV's would betray our plight
if we should turn them on at night.
They soon would fill with violence... rape.
With sex, perversion, death and hate.

If good was bad and bad was good
God's word would be misunderstood.

Soon, men would think it quite all right
to lay with other men at night.

The Bible warns there'll come a day
when men will start to think this way.
That day is coming soon, i fear.
in truth, it is already here!
~

If Strong Was Weak

If strong was weak, and weak was strong,
the strong would cease to do their wrong.
For strong ones then would have to do,
what weaker people told them to.

Each unborn child would then be born.
Not slain because of parents scorn.
And no small child would ever see
their parents beat them needlessly.

The homeless then would have the right
to have a place to sleep at night.
And hungry people in the street
would always have enough to eat.

And then we would no longer see
the young mistreat the elderly.
For they no longer would be told,
"You have no use. You are too old."

If weak was strong and strong was weak,
the strong would then become the meek.
And would no longer have the say.
So it will be, on Judgment Day.
~

The Beautiful City Of Brotherly Love

The Beautiful City of Brotherly Love,
was a place, so they say, in the sky up above.
Now, the people of Bad Town had heard of that city.

And they wanted to go there. It sounded so pretty!

They decided one day to just pack up and go.
“We can be there by noon, if we don’t go too slow.”
So they packed up their things and they headed up North.
But that wasn’t the right way to get there, of course.

So they headed down South, and they’d gone quite a way,
when one fellow Badkin had something to say:
“We have traveled one hundred and twenty-three miles,
with nary a sign of that city of smiles.
So let **me** take charge for the rest of the day.
‘Cause I think we are lost and have gone the wrong way.”

So he turned them all left and they headed out East.
They crossed nineteen rivers. Encountered wild beasts!
They traveled for hundreds and hundreds of miles.
Down hollows and valleys, up hills, and through trials.

'Till, finally, they figured that way wasn’t best.
So they all turned around and they headed out west.
They went past St. Louis, and town after town.
With nary a smile, but with many a frown.

Then, they came to the Rockies, all lofty and high.
One yelled, “Here’s the way to that town in the sky!”
So they climbed and they climbed ‘till they got to the top.
And one of them said, “It’s not here. We must stop.”

“But where is the city of love?”, someone said.
“I don’t see it behind. I don’t see it ahead.”
“It must be a fairy tale.”, someone else said.
And if looks could have killed, well, that man would be dead.

Midst all this confusion, appeared a small child.
He spoke very softly. He acted quite mild.
”I know the way to that city.”, He said.
And as quick as a rabbit, they all turned their heads.

“ I've been to The City of Brotherly love,
and it’s not down below, and it’s not up above.
You never will find it by searching these lands.
It’s as close as your breath, or the palms of your hands.

‘For The Beautiful City of Brotherly love,
lives here in our hearts, though it comes from above.

If you only believe, you may live there, right now.
The Words of the Bible, have shown us all how.

So they headed back home, without worry or fear.
And in just forty days, they saw Bad Town appear.
As they rounded the corner, this sign hung above,

The Beautiful City Of Brotherly Love

*Acts 17:27 - God wanted people to look for him, and perhaps in searching all around for him, they would find him. But he is not far from any of us. (ERV)

The Thing With No Brain

Oh, I searched life in vain for the thing with no brain.
I searched high. I searched low. I looked under.
I searched when it snowed, even when the wind blowed,
and I searched through the rain and the thunder.

Oh, I searched every day as I went on life's way,
but it seemed that I never could find it.
Oh, it drove me insane, did this thing with no brain.
Maybe someday, I'd sneak up behind it.

I searched overhead. I searched under my bed.
Oh, I searched till I started to wonder.
Am I searching in vain for this thing with no brain?
Has everything been just a blunder?

Till one day I awoke with this thought. It's a joke.
And instantly, all became clearer.
For the thing with no brain... that once drove me insane...
was staring at me in the mirror.

Appendix C
Paintings

Painting # 1 - For Birdie Martin - March 2017

Painting # 2 - For Jalyn Martin - April 2018

Painting # 3 - For Mandi Martin Ratliff - May 2018

Painting # 4 - For Keenan Martin - June 2019

Painting # 5 - For Jason Martin - May 2020

Painting # 6 - For Jade Ratliff - December 2023

Appendix D
Abbreviated Genealogies

Martin Family History

My paternal 5th Great-Grandfather John Martin lived in North Carolina and died there in about 1780. His son James moved to Dickson, Tennessee where he died in 1838, aged 78. James's son Robert also died in Dickson before 1832, aged about 33. Robert's son George W. Martin moved from Tennessee to Southern Illinois after first marrying and having children in Tennessee. He was living in the village of Long Branch, several miles north of Harrisburg, when he died, aged 77. George's son, James Monroe, was born while his parents still lived in Tennessee. He also moved to Southern Illinois, probably when his parents moved here. He died in Saline County in 1935, aged 75. He is buried in Pierson Cemetery, also known as Saline Ridge Cemetery. James's son Elmer lived his life in Saline County. He died in 1960, aged 77 and is buried in Spring Valley Cemetery. Grandpa Elmer's son Herman was also born in Saline County. He died here in 1999, aged 79 and is buried with my mom in Walnut Grove Baptist Church Cemetery. I, Lyndell Martin, was born in Saline County in 1950 and suppose I will die here. I will be buried with my wife in Sunset Garden Cemetery in Harrisburg.

Ward Family History

My maternal 2nd Great-Grandfather Eli Ward appears to have been born in Wales, or possibly North Carolina in 1810. By 1834 Eli was living in Southern Illinois, as he married Elizabeth "Betsy" Garrison in Gallatin

County that year. Elizabeth appears to have been born in Smith County, Tennessee. Eli and Betsy raised their family on their Walnut Grove area Farm located between Mitchellsville and Carrier Mills, Saline County, Illinois. Eli died in Saline County in 1880, aged 70. Notably, he and his wife both died on the same day, June 6, 1880. I have not been able to learn the circumstances of their deaths. There is purported to have been a family cemetery on the farm. If so, it is possible the strip mines left the cemetery in place and mined around it. However, Findagrave.com lists Eli and Betsy as having been buried in Walnut Grove Baptist Church Cemetery, Memorial ID103110900, but I have not found their graves there.

The following paragraph is taken from Carl and Irma Ward's research book on the Ward history. Irma gave a copy of the book to Tessie Ward Martin and she passed it on to me, her son.

"The family story is that Eli and his brothers left North Carolina and crossed the Ohio River from Kentucky to Illinois. They crossed the river on ice in a covered wagon, probably at Golconda between 1830 and 1834. Eli's brothers were possibly James & Burrell. Both report England as their place of birth on the census records, while Eli consistently lists his place of birth as North Carolina on the census records. Family tradition relates that Eli came from England by ship to North or South Carolina and that his brothers came from Wales. On the 1840 census, Eli, Betsy and one child are listed as farming in Gallatin County, with an older male living with them. Possibly one of Eli's brothers. I'm guessing it was James, since he is not listed on the census that year. Also farming in Gallatin County in 1840 is Burrell Ward. The 1850 census reports Eli, James and Burrell as farming in Saline County. Saline County was formed from Gallatin County in 1847, so this is consistent with the County change on the 1840 to 1850 census." (Irma Ward)

Eli was the father of John Ward. John was born in Illinois in 1855 and died in Saline County in 1925, aged 70. John's son Everett was born in Saline county in 1881 and died there in 1957 aged 76. He is buried with his wife in Walnut Grove Cemetery. Grandpa Everett's daughter Tessie was my mom. She was born in Saline County in 1922 and died there in 2019 aged 96. She is buried in Walnut Grove Baptist Church Cemetery with my dad. I, Lyndell Martin, was born in Saline County in 1950 and suppose I will die here. I will be buried with my wife in Sunset Garden Cemetery in Harrisburg.

Bayne Family History

My wife Roberta's cousin Marilee Baker had extensive professional research done on the Bayne family tree. As a result, the Bayne name has been traced all the way back to Walter Bayne, born about 1548 in Nidderdale, (also known as Netherdale), North Yorkshire, England. He was my wife's 9th paternal Great-Grandfather. Walter died in 1616 aged 68. I will not list every generation here, but that information is included among the genealogy reports that follow. Note that there are 3 Walter's and 3 John's in the lineage. Walter R. Bayne, born about 1616 was the first to move to the United States. He was living in Charles County, Colony of Maryland, Colonial America when he died May 28, 1670 aged 54. The family line remained in Maryland until John Bayne Sr. move to Switzerland County, Indiana sometime before his death in 1867 aged 80. His son, John Jr. moved to Hardin County, Illinois sometime before his death in 1881 aged 53. John Junior's son Spencer died in Hardin County in 1917 aged 47. Spencer's son John Robert Bayne was born in Hardin county in 1915 and died in Saline County December 13, 1982 aged 67. He was the father of my wife Roberta.

Bebout Family History

On Roberta's maternal side, her Great-Grandfather James Marion Bebout was born May 25, 1848 and died December 9, 1908 aged 60. His son Burl was born May 11, 1883 and died July 20, 1962 aged 79. He is buried along with his wife in Collier Cemetery, Pope County, Illinois. Burl was father to Dora Mable who was Roberta's mother. Dora was born October 28, 1931 in Pope County. She died March 7, 2020 in Saline county aged 88.

Descendants of John MARTIN

12 Dec 2023

1. John MARTIN (d. Abt 1780-North Carolina)
- sp: UNKNOWN
  - 2. James MARTIN (b. 1760-Mecklenburg, North Carolina, United States d. 24 Feb 1838-Dickson, Tennessee)
    - sp: Rachel MEEK (b. 1775 d. 1850-Dickson Co, Tennessee, United States?)
      - 3. Robert MARTIN (b. 1799-Tennessee d. Bef 1832-Dickson, Tennessee)
        - sp: Mary Darwin PETTY (b. 1808 m. Abt 1825 d. 1848)
          - 4. George W MARTIN (b. 1823-Wilson, DeKalb, Tennessee, 2nd District d. Abt 1900-Long Branch, Saline County, Illinois)
            - sp: Martha Ann ROBINSON (b. Abt 1826-Wilson, Tennessee m. 17 Nov 1844 d. Abt 1880){+}
              - 5. Matilda MARTIN (b. Est 1846-Wilson, Tennessee)
              - 5. Margaret Emaline MARTIN (b. Est 1848-Wilson, DeKalb, Tennessee, 2nd District d. 1891-Saline County, Illinois)
              - 5. William H.B. MARTIN (b. 26 Jul 1854 Est.-Tennessee, United States d. 20 Jan 1934-Eldorado, Illinois)
                - sp: Etta SMITH
              - 5. Thomas (Wiley?) MARTIN (b. 1854 d. UNKNOWN)
                - sp: Maggie JENNINS
              - 5. Edward MARTIN (b. Est 1857-DeKalb, Tennessee, 2nd District)
              - 5. James Monroe MARTIN (b. 7 Mar 1860-2nd District, DeKalb, T, United States d. 10 Apr 1935-H, Saline, I, United States)
                - sp: Julia Josephine SPURLOCK (b. Jun 1861-Saline County, Illinois m. 8 Oct 1882 d. 1950)
                - 6. Essie MARTIN (b. Feb 1882 d. UNKNOWN)
                - 6. Elmer MARTIN (b. 5 Nov 1883-Saline County, Illinois d. 25 Nov 1960-Harrisburg, Illinois)
                  - sp: Martha Ethyl DUNCAN (b. 26 Feb 1896-Saline County, Illinois m. 24 Feb 1917 d. 27 Oct 1950-a, Illinois)
                  - 7. UNKNOWN MARTIN (b. Est 1916-1817)
                  - 7. Eugene MARTIN (b. 26 Jul 1918-Saline County, Illinois d. 26 Mar 1919-Harrisburg, Saline Co. Illinois)
                  - 7. Jessie MARTIN (b. 27 Jun 1919-Ledford, Saline Co. Illinois d. 27 Jun 1919-Ledford, Saline Co. Illinois)
                  - 7. Herman MARTIN (b. 4 Jun 1920-Harrisburg, Illinois d. 9 Jun 1999-At home in Harrisburg Illinois)
                    - sp: Tessie WARD (b. 27 Jul 1922-Saline Co. Illinois m. 24 Dec 1946 d. 14 Jan 2019-Carrier Mills Nursing H)
                    - 8. Patricia Ann MARTIN (b. 7 Dec 1947)
                      - sp: James Vernon PATTERSON (b. 14 Jun 1945 m. 28 Feb 1969)
                      - 9. Joni Jean PATTERSON (b. 11 Dec 1971)
                      - 9. Jamie Lynn PATTERSON (b. 13 Aug 1978)
                        - sp: Clinton CARTER (b. 2 Sep)
                        - 10. Cassi Lynn CARTER (b. 1 Sep 1999)
                      - 9. Jordan James PATTERSON (b. 21 Dec 1981)
                        - sp: Kacie
                        - 10. Lincoln PATTERSON (b. 18 Dec 2012)
                    - 8. Lyndell Ray MARTIN (b. 8 Dec 1950-Harrisburg, Illinois u. Sunset Gardens, Saline, H, I, United States)
                      - sp: Roberta Lilly BAYNE (b. 8 Feb 1955-, Illinois (In a car between Harrisburg & Eldo m. 12 Apr 1974)
                      - 9. Miranda Lynn MARTIN (b. 18 Jan 1976-Evansille, Indiana)
                        - sp: Wade Franklin RATLIFF (b. 26 Apr 1972 m. 14 Jul 1995){S|B}
                        - 10. Jade Raven RATLIFF (b. 2 May 1997)
                          - sp: Johnathan SMITH (m. (nm))
                          - 11. Briar Lynn SMITH (b. 29 Dec 2018-Carbondale, Illinois)
                        - 10. Tristan Gage RATLIFF (b. 16 May 2001)
                      - 9. Jason Daniel MARTIN (b. 21 Aug 1979-Evansille, Indiana)
                        - sp: Melinda MURPHY (b. 21 Sep 1982 m. 30 Sep 2005)

Descendants of Eli WARD

12 Dec 2023

1. Eli WARD (b. 1810-North Carolina d. 6 Jun 1880-Saline Co. Illinois)

sp: Elizabeth GARRISON (b. 10 May 1818-Smith County, Tennessee m. 26 Jun 1834 d. 6 Jun 1880-Saline County, Illinois)

- 2. James WARD (b. 1838-Saline Co. Illinois d. Peoria, Illinois)
  - sp: Vesta GASKINS (b. Mar 1846 d. 15 Apr 1918-Christian County, Illinois)
    - 3. Lydia A. WARD (b. Abt 1864)
    - 3. Charles WARD (b. 1867)
    - 3. Mary WARD (b. 1869)
    - 3. Carrie WARD (b. Abt 1874)
    - 3. John WARD (b. 1875)
    - 3. Ollie WARD (b. 1878)
    - 3. Nettie WARD (b. Abt 1879)
    - 3. Fannie WARD (b. 1882)
    - 3. Ada WARD (b. 1884)
    - 3. Verba WARD (b. 1887)
- 2. Jabus WARD (b. 17 Feb 1843-Saline Or Christian County d. 18 Aug 1912-Corum, Oklahoma)
- 2. Josephus WARD (b. Abt 1846-Saline County, Illinois d. Illinois)
  - sp: Juanita MCDONALD
    - 3. Jim WARD
- 2. George WARD (b. 8 Sep 1848-Saline County, Illinois d. 5 Sep 1928-Saline County, Illinois)
- 2. Charles WARD (b. Jan 1849-Saline County, Illinois d. Jul 1849-Saline County, Illinois)
- 2. Benjamine F. WARD (b. 1850-Illinois d. Illinois)
- 2. Sarah J. (?Elizabeth) WARD (b. Abt 1852-Illinois d. Bef 1910-Illinois)
  - sp: Bluford CARRIER (b. 1851 m. 2 Oct 1887)
- 2. John WARD (b. 9 Apr 1855-Illinois d. 25 Apr 1925-Saline County, Illinois)
  - sp: Mary E HOLMES (b. 1861 m. 20 Aug 1880 d. 1942)
    - 3. Everett WARD (b. 3 Jan 1881-Saline Co. Illinois d. 14 Aug 1957-Saline Co. Illinois)
      - sp: Perlie Agnes LANGFORD (b. 6 Sep 1885-Allendale, Illinois d. 18 Jan 1963-Harrisburg, Illinois)
        - 4. Lucy Mae WARD (b. 6 Mar 1903 d. 3 Oct 1920)
        - 4. Beulah Dall WARD (b. 29 Nov 1904 d. 15 May 1926)
        - 4. Mable Carrie WARD (b. 25 Mar 1907 d. 28 Feb 1983-Saline Co. Illinois)
          - sp: Thomas AUSTIN
            - 5. James Thomas AUSTIN
            - 5. Ronald Lee AUSTIN
        - 4. Syble Grace WARD (b. 2 Nov 1908 d. 20 Feb 1990)
          - sp: Herbert GULLETT
            - 5. Gary GULLETT
        - 4. Ruby Irene WARD (b. 16 Aug 1911 d. 19 Nov 1913)
        - 4. Joseph Lee WARD (b. 9 Jun 1914 d. 6 Nov 1965)
          - sp: Myrtle DIEFENBACH
            - 5. William Joseph WARD
            - 5. John Wayne WARD
            - 5. Larry WARD
        - 4. Olia Bernice WARD (b. 6 May 1917-Saline County, Illinois)
          - sp: William WILSON

- 5. Billy WILSON
- 5. Robert Jean WILSON
- 5. Shermane WILSON
  - sp: Carl Edward MURPHY
    - 6. Audie MURPHY
    - 6. Scott MURPHY
    - 6. Shawn MURPHY
- 4. Thelma Louise WARD (b. 23 Dec 1919 d. 1991)
  - sp: David Lee DUKE
    - 5. Sandra DUKE
      - sp: Bruce BISHOP
        - 6. Todd BISHOP
        - 6. Perry BISHOP
    - 5. Pearl DUKE
      - sp: Jack BOATRIGHT
        - 6. Jodie Renee BOATRIGHT (b. 19 Oct 1964 d. 28 Jan 2019)
          - sp: Brian KEITH (b. 18 Aug 1962 m. 29 Feb 2004)
- 4. Tessie WARD (b. 27 Jul 1922-Saline Co. Illinois d. 14 Jan 2019-Carrier Mills Nursing Home)
  - sp: Herman MARTIN (b. 4 Jun 1920-Harrisburg, Illinois m. 24 Dec 1946 d. 9 Jun 1999-At home in Harrisburg Illinois)
    - 5. Patricia Ann MARTIN (b. 7 Dec 1947)
      - sp: James Vernon PATTERSON (b. 14 Jun 1945 m. 28 Feb 1969)
        - 6. Joni Jean PATTERSON (b. 11 Dec 1971)
        - 6. Jamie Lynn PATTERSON (b. 13 Aug 1978)
          - sp: Clinton CARTER (b. 2 Sep)
            - 7. Cassi Lynn CARTER (b. 1 Sep 1999)
        - 6. Jordan James PATTERSON (b. 21 Dec 1981)
          - sp: Kacie
            - 7. Lincoln PATTERSON (b. 18 Dec 2012)
    - 5. Lyndell Ray MARTIN (b. 8 Dec 1950-Harrisburg, Illinois u. Sunset Gardens, Saline, Harrisburg, Illinois, United States)
      - sp: Roberta Lilly BAYNE (b. 8 Feb 1955-Eldorado, Illinois (In a car between Harrisburg & Eldorado) m. 12 Apr 1974)
        - 6. Miranda Lynn MARTIN (b. 18 Jan 1976-Evansille, Indiana)
          - sp: Wade Franklin RATLIFF (b. 26 Apr 1972 m. 14 Jul 1995){SIB}
            - 7. Jade Raven RATLIFF (b. 2 May 1997)
              - sp: Johnathan SMITH (m. (nm))
                - 8. Briar Lynn SMITH (b. 29 Dec 2018-Carbondale, Illinois)
            - 7. Tristan Gage RATLIFF (b. 16 May 2001)
        - 6. Jason Daniel MARTIN (b. 21 Aug 1979-Evansille, Indiana)
          - sp: Melinda MURPHY (b. 21 Sep 1982 m. 30 Sep 2005)
            - 7. Keenan Daniel MARTIN (b. 27 Jul 2005)
            - 7. Jalyn Sue MARTIN (b. 8 Jul 2009)
            - 7. Kendall Bayne MARTIN (b. 3 Dec 2012)
          - sp: Amanda Gail NOLEN (b. 28 Dec 1980 m. 20 Oct 1999)
            - 7. Baleigh Danielle MARTIN (b. 17 May 2000)
    - 5. Leslie Eugene MARTIN (b. 2 Apr 1952)
      - sp: Terri Leigh WEBB (b. 20 Dec 1956 m. 9 Jul 1977)
        - 6. Amber Dawn MARTIN (b. 29 Mar 1979)

- sp: Jason FERRELL (b. 1975)
  - 7. Noah Dylan FERRELL (b. 1998)
  - 7. Cole FERRELL (b. 1999)
- 6. Asheligh Christa MARTIN (b. 11 Mar 1982)
- 6. Alyssa Allen MARTIN (b. 22 Jan 1988)
  - sp: Seth COCKRUM
    - 7. Grey (b. 3 Dec 2017)
- 4. Charles John WARD (b. 11 Oct 1924 d. 2 Nov 1949)
- 4. Eula Mae WARD (b. 28 Jun 1928 d. 17 Mar 2012-Eldorado, Illinois nursing home)
  - sp: Robert Lee MOORE (b. 1927 d. 1998-Harrisburg, Illinois)
- 3. Burt WARD (b. 1888 d. 1961)
  - sp: ADA
  - 4. Estel WARD
  - 4. Louise WARD
  - 4. John WARD (b. Abt 1930)
    - sp: Clara LANE
      - 5. Lonnie WARD
      - 5. Richard WARD
      - 5. Edward WARD
      - 5. Bruce WARD
  - 4. Elmer WARD
  - 4. Delmer WARD
  - 4. Evanelle WARD
- 3. Verba WARD (b. 1888)
- 3. Nellie WARD (b. 1892)
- 3. Stella WARD (b. 1892)

Descendants of Walter BAYNE

16 Dec 2023

1. Walter BAYNE (b. Abt 1548-Nidderdale, North Yorkshire d. Abt 1616-Limely, York, England)

sp: UNKNOWN

2. John BAYNE (b. Abt 1580-Limley, Yorkshire, England d. St. Thomas Parish, Southwark St. Thomas Parish, Surry, England)

sp: Margaret NEWTON (m. 1 Oct 1603)

3. Walter R. BAYNE (b. Abt 1616-Southwark St. Thomas Parish, Surrey, England d. 28 May 1670-Charles County, Colony of Maryland)

sp: Ellinor

4. John BAYNE (b. Abt 1662-Charles County, Colony of Maryland d. 25 Oct 1701-Trip to England)

sp: Anne WARREN (m. Abt 1682)

5. Walter BAYNE (b. Abt 1681-Charles County, Colony of Maryland d. 1754-Prince George’s County, Maryland)

sp: Martha HAWKINS (b. 1686-PGsC, Maryland m. 21 Mar 1705 d. Aft 12 Jun 1775-Prince George's County, Maryland)

6. Ebsworth BAYNE Sr. (b. Abt 1719-Colony of Maryland d. 26 Nov 1793)

sp: Susannah Lee MIDDLETON (m. 21 Mar 1707)

7. Henry Holland BAYNE (b. Between 1755 And 1760-P, Colony of Maryland d. Abt Sep 1792)

sp: Sophia DUVALL (b. 8 Jun 1755)

8. John BAYNE Sr. (b. Abt 2 Jul 1787-PGsC, Maryland d. 19 Aug 1867)

sp: Charity TURNER (m. Abt 1807)

9. John BAYNE Jr. (b. Abt 1828-Switzerland County, Indiana d. Abt 16 May 1881)

sp: Mary Elizabeth DAWSON (m. Abt 1868)

- 10. Spencer Lee BAYNE (b. Jan 1870-Hardin County, Illinois d. 18 Apr 1917-Lead Hill In Hardin Co)
  - sp: Lillian Dora BEAVERS (b. 17 Oct 1873 d. Aug 1951)
    - 11. Fred Kenneth BAYNE (b. Aug 1896 d. Dec 1924)
    - 11. Floya BAYNE
    - 11. Floyd William BAYNE (b. 22 Feb 1901-Hardin County, Illinois d. 22 May 1973-)
      - sp: Anna MCDOWELL (m. 23 Dec 1931)
    - 11. Ova BAYNE (b. 11 Mar 1905 d. 27 Oct 1974)
    - 11. Lola BAYNE
    - 11. Spencer Lee BAYNE
    - 11. Troy Emmet BAYNE
    - 11. Lillian Elizabeth BAYNE
    - 11. Lillian BAYNE
    - 11. John Robert BAYNE (b. 22 Jun 1915-Hardin County, Illinois d. 13 Dec 1982-, Eldorado Illi)
      - sp: Dora Mable BEBOUT (b. 28 Oct 1931-PC, Illinois m. 14 Sep 1950 d. 7 Mar 2020-)
        - 12. Vickie Rose BAYNE (b. 1 Jan 1952)
          - sp: Kenneth Dale FULKERSON (d. 14 Dec 2020-Evansille, Indiana)
            - 13. Crystal Gail FULKERSON
              - sp: Jeremy PALMER
                - 14. Deacon PALMER
                - 14. Kannon PALMER
        - 12. Roberta Lilly BAYNE (b. 8 Feb 1955-, Illinois (In a car betwe u. SG, H, Illinois)
          - sp: Lyndell Ray MARTIN (b. 8 Dec 1950-Harrisburg, Illinois m. 12 Apr 1974u.)
            - 13. Miranda Lynn MARTIN (b. 18 Jan 1976-Evansille, Indiana)
              - sp: Wade Franklin RATLIFF (b. 26 Apr 1972 m. 14 Jul 1995){SlB}
                - 14. Jade Raven RATLIFF (b. 2 May 1997)
                - sp: Johnathan SMITH (m. (nm))

15. Briar Lynn SMITH (b. 29 Dec 2018-Carbondale, Illinois)

14. Tristan Gage RATLIFF (b. 16 May 2001)

13. Jason Daniel MARTIN (b. 21 Aug 1979-Evansille, Indiana)

sp: Melinda MURPHY (b. 21 Sep 1982 m. 30 Sep 2005)

14. Keenan Daniel MARTIN (b. 27 Jul 2005)

14. Jalyn Sue MARTIN (b. 8 Jul 2009)

14. Kendall Bayne MARTIN (b. 3 Dec 2012)

sp: Amanda Gail NOLEN (b. 28 Dec 1980 m. 20 Oct 1999)

14. Baleigh Danielle MARTIN (b. 17 May 2000)

12. John BAYNE Jr.

sp: Tammy GASS

13. Wesley BAYNE

13. Joshuah Eugene BAYNE

12. Darryl Brent BAYNE (b. 14 Dec 1969)

sp: Margaret J. BAKER (m. 24 Dec 1852)

Descendants of James Marion BEBOUT

16 Dec 2023

1. James Marion BEBOUT (b. 25 May 1848 d. 9 Dec 1908)

sp: Mary CARNETT (b. 1856 d. 1916)

- 2. James BEBOUT (b. 25 Feb 1876 d. 6 Apr 1942)
- 2. Albert BEBOUT (b. 1 Mar 1879 d. 20 Nov 1917)
- 2. Burel BEBOUT (b. 11 May 1883 d. 20 Jul 1962)
  - sp: Cora Mable HICKS (b. 29 Jan 1894 m. 12 Feb 1914 d. 24 Feb 1988-Rosiclare Illinois)
    - 3. Marie BEBOUT (b. 13 Jun 1910 d. 2003)
    - 3. Luster BEBOUT (b. 25 Aug 1915 d. 10 May 1928)
    - 3. Della Jane BEBOUT (b. 8 Dec 1917 u. 9 Jan 1983)
    - 3. Stella BEBOUT (b. 10 Jun 1920 d. 7 Jul 2007)
    - 3. Lincoln BEBOUT (b. 25 Dec 1922)
    - 3. Ruby Mae BEBOUT (b. 1 May 1925)
    - 3. Charles Ray BEBOUT (b. 19 Jun 1927)
    - 3. Mary Francis BEBOUT (b. 23 Sep 1929)
    - 3. Dora Mable BEBOUT (b. 28 Oct 1931-Pope County, Illinois d. 7 Mar 2020-Carbondale Memorial Hospital)
      - sp: John Robert BAYNE (b. 22 Jun 1915-Hardin County, Illinois m. 14 Sep 1950 d. 13 Dec 1982-Ferrell Hospital, Eldorado Illinois)
        - 4. Vickie Rose BAYNE (b. 1 Jan 1952)
          - sp: Kenneth Dale FULKERSON (d. 14 Dec 2020-Evansille, Indiana)
            - 5. Crystal Gail FULKERSON
              - sp: Jeremy PALMER
                - 6. Deacon PALMER
                - 6. Kannon PALMER
        - 4. Roberta Lilly BAYNE (b. 8 Feb 1955-Eldorado, Illinois (In a car between Harrisburg & Eldorado) u. Sunset Gardens, H, Illinois)
          - sp: Lyndell Ray MARTIN (b. 8 Dec 1950-Harrisburg, Illinois m. 12 Apr 1974u. Sunset Gardens, Saline, H, I, United States)
            - 5. Miranda Lynn MARTIN (b. 18 Jan 1976-Evansille, Indiana)
              - sp: Wade Franklin RATLIFF (b. 26 Apr 1972 m. 14 Jul 1995){SlB}
                - 6. Jade Raven RATLIFF (b. 2 May 1997)
                - sp: Johnathan SMITH (m. (nm))
                - 7. Briar Lynn SMITH (b. 29 Dec 2018-Carbondale, Illinois)
                - 6. Tristan Gage RATLIFF (b. 16 May 2001)
            - 5. Jason Daniel MARTIN (b. 21 Aug 1979-Evansille, Indiana)
              - sp: Melinda MURPHY (b. 21 Sep 1982 m. 30 Sep 2005)
                - 6. Keenan Daniel MARTIN (b. 27 Jul 2005)
                - 6. Jalyn Sue MARTIN (b. 8 Jul 2009)
                - 6. Kendall Bayne MARTIN (b. 3 Dec 2012)
              - sp: Amanda Gail NOLEN (b. 28 Dec 1980 m. 20 Oct 1999)
                - 6. Baleigh Danielle MARTIN (b. 17 May 2000)
        - 4. John BAYNE Jr.
          - sp: Tammy GASS
            - 5. Wesley BAYNE
            - 5. Joshuah Eugene BAYNE
        - 4. Darryl Brent BAYNE (b. 14 Dec 1969)
    - 3. Vern BEBOUT (b. 28 Oct 1933)
      - sp: Alvis KLUGE (m. 22 Nov 1955)

- 3. Ray Edward BEBOUT (b. 8 Aug 1938)
  - sp: Jean TURNAGE (m. 1 Oct 1958)
- 2. Lucion BEBOUT (b. 13 Oct 1885 d. 19 Oct 1976)
- 2. Effie BEBOUT (b. 5 Feb 1888 d. 1 Feb 1978)
- 2. Cassie BEBOUT (b. 31 Jan 1890 d. 1967)
- 2. Ada BEBOUT (b. 1 Sep 1892 d. 27 May 1945)
- 2. Marion BEBOUT (b. 17 Mar 1895 d. 7 Aug 1965)

Appendix E
Pictures

Melissa Parker Langford
My Maternal Great Grandmother

Elmer & Martha Duncan Martin
My Paternal Gradparents

Everett & Pearl Langford Ward
My Maternal Grandparents

Mom's Family - Top: John, Everett, Pearl, Joe, Tessie, Eula
Bottom: - Ollie, Syble, Mable, Thelma

Aunt Syble Ward Gullett
Saved my life - See page 9

Herman and Tessie Ward Martin
My Parents

SUGgestions

MAY-JUNE 1987

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SPECTRAVIDEO USERS GROUP

VOLUME FIVE (C) 1987 S.U.G.

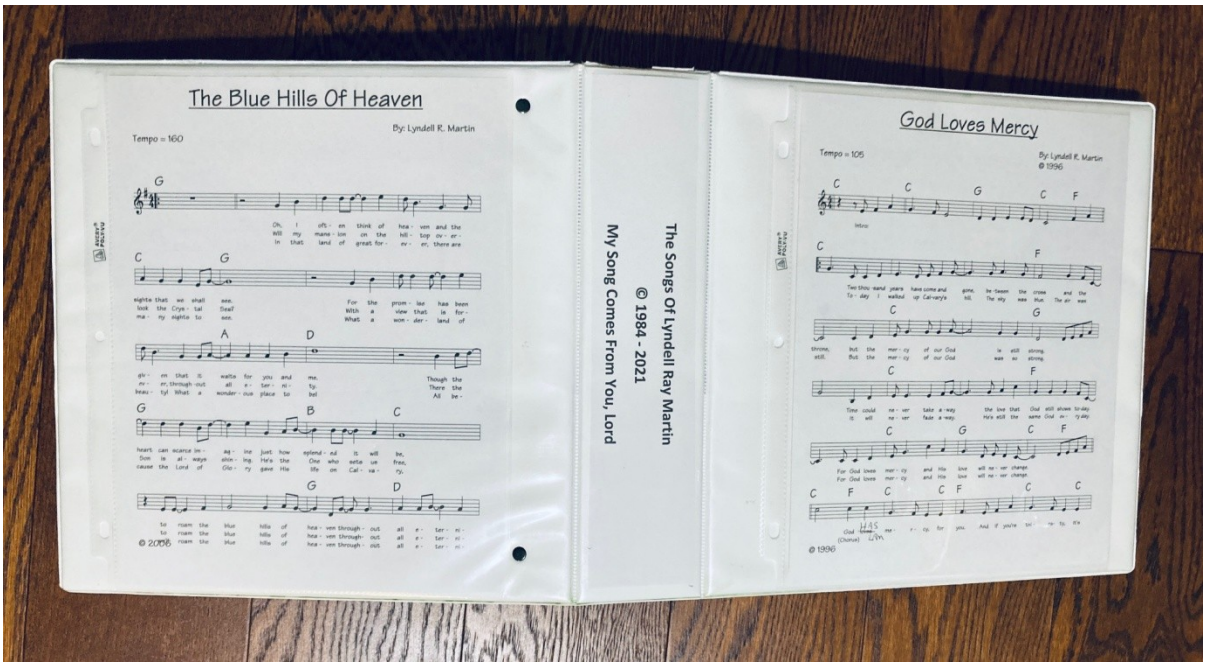
GREETINGS TO ALL OF OUR FRIENDS! WE HOPE THAT YOU WILL FIND THIS ISSUE OF THE SUGgestions NEWSLETTER TO BE BOTH INFORMITIVE AND ENTERTAINING. WE'RE SURE THAT YOU WILL NOTICE OUR "NEW LOOK" RIGHT AWAY. THERE ARE TWO THINGS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CHANGES. FIRST OF ALL, WE HAVE AQUIRED A NEW NEAR LETTER QUALITY PRINTER FOR USE IN PREPARING THE NEWSLETTERS. SO FAR, WE ARE DELIGHTED WITH IT. THE MAIN DRAWBACK IS THAT IT HAS MANY FEATURES WHICH ARE NOT ACCESSABLE THRU JUSTWRITE JR. ONCE WE LEARN HOW TO INSTALL THE NEW PRINTER IN OUR WORDSTAR PROGRAM THOUGH, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE USE OF THEM. FOR NOW, WE MAY JUST PRINT EACH PAGE IN A DIFFERENT FORMAT TO SHOW YOU SOME OF THE CAPABILITIES OF THIS NEW PRINTER. (YOU MAY DECIDE YOU WANT ONE FOR YOURSELF.)

THE N.L.Q. 180 PRINTER PRINTS AT 180 CPS IN DRAFT MODE. IT FEATURES BI-DIRECTIONAL PRINTING AND WILL PRINT IN PICA, ELITE, CONDENSED, BOLDFACE, EMPHASIZED, ENLARGED AND SEVERAL COMBINATIONS OF THE ABOVE. IT ALSO HAS UNDERLINING, SUPERSCRIPT AND SUBSCRIPT CAPABILITIES, AS WELL AS QUADRUPLE DENSITY GRAPHICS MODE. ONE OF THE BEST FEATURES, HOWEVER, IS THE 8K RAM WHICH ALLOWS THE PRINTER TO ACCEPT 8K OF DATA FROM THE COMPUER ALMOST INSTANTLY. THIS FREES UP THE COMPUTER FOR OTHER USE WHILE THE PRINTER IS BUSY PRINTING OUT A FILE. THIS CAN BE A REAL TIME SAVER! THE RETAIL PRICE OF THIS PRINTER IS $499, THE CLUB CAN GET THEM FOR YOU FOR $299 PLUS S&H.

THE SECOND CHANGE IN OUR APPEARANCE IS ONE WE ARE QUITE PROUD OF ALSO! OUR NEW LETTERHEAD IS THE BRAINCHILD OF JAMES HUXSOL, THE WINNER OF OUR LAST ISSUES LETTERHEAD CONTEST. JIM TELLS US THAT HE SPENT TWENTY HOURS AND CONSUMED OVER FIFTY SHEETS OF PAPER IN PREPARING THE PROGRAM WHICH PRODUCED THE LETTERHEAD! JIM FIRST DREW EACH LETTER ON 7x7 GRPAH PAPER TO CONVERT THEM TO BINARY CODING. THEN HE "TYPED IN EACH AND EVERY NUMBER AS DATA". THE PROGRAM CONTAINS ABSOLUTLY HUNDREDS OF DATA NUMBERS! ANYWAY, WE ARE VERY PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS AND ARE HAPPY TO SEND JIM A COMPLIMENTARY COPY OF THE LEDGERS' EDGE AS OUR WAY OF SAYING THANKS TO OUR CONTEST WINNER!

WE PLAN TO INCLUDE IN THIS ISSUE SOME PROGRAMS THAT YOU CAN COPY DIRECTLY INTO YOUR 328 AND SAVE TO TAPE WITH THE CSAVE"FILENAME" COMMAND. WE HAVEN'T BEEN INCLUDING MANY OF THESE, BECAUSE IT'S HARD TO KEEP QUALITY PROGRAMS DOWN TO A SMALL ENOUGH SIZE TO FIT INTO THE NEWSLETTER. WE HOPE YOU WILL FIND THE INCLUDED PROGRAMS USEFUL. YOU WILL FIND THAT YOU CAN EASILY ADD YOUR OWN TOUCHES TO THESE PROGRAMS TO CUSTOMIZE THEM SO THAT THEY WILL BETTER SUIT YOUR OWN PARTICULAR NEEDS.

SUGgestions Newsletter Sample
Written for the computer users group I Operated



Songbook Of Lyndell Ray Martin
Approximately 125 Songs

Herman Martin

Tessie Ward Martin

Herman Martin Family

Buddy's school pictures from first grade through Senior year (1956 - 1967)

Add:
Picture of Wade carrying Jade out of the delivery room.
Picture of Briar's photo book I made for her.
Cover of dad's WW2 book.
Keenan's hunting knife

Appendix F
Selected
Sheet Music

I originally intended to include only my very best songs in this appendix. Then I realized that most of my songs have a special place in my heart... even some of the "bad ones". So I've included several of them here as well. But take heart! The better songs have been marked. Those marked with asterisks (*) are songs that have been professionally recorded. Those marked with hash tags (#) are "The best of the rest", but have not been professionally recorded. *The songs I wrote especially for family members are in italics.*

Please note that, for your convenience, there are three separate tables of contents below. All three include the same songs, but in different order. The first table list the songs in roughly "BEST FIRST" order. The second lists the songs in "ALPHABETICAL" order and the third lists them in "PAGE NUMBER" order.

A few of the songs in this appendix have been updated with improved lyrics and/or melody since the sheet music was produced. Some updated versions may be found at archive.org (Search instructions can be found in the Notes to the Reader section on pages 6 & 7)

Sheet Music Index

Songs that have been professionally recorded are marked with an asterisks*.
Other much loved songs are indicated with a hash tag #.

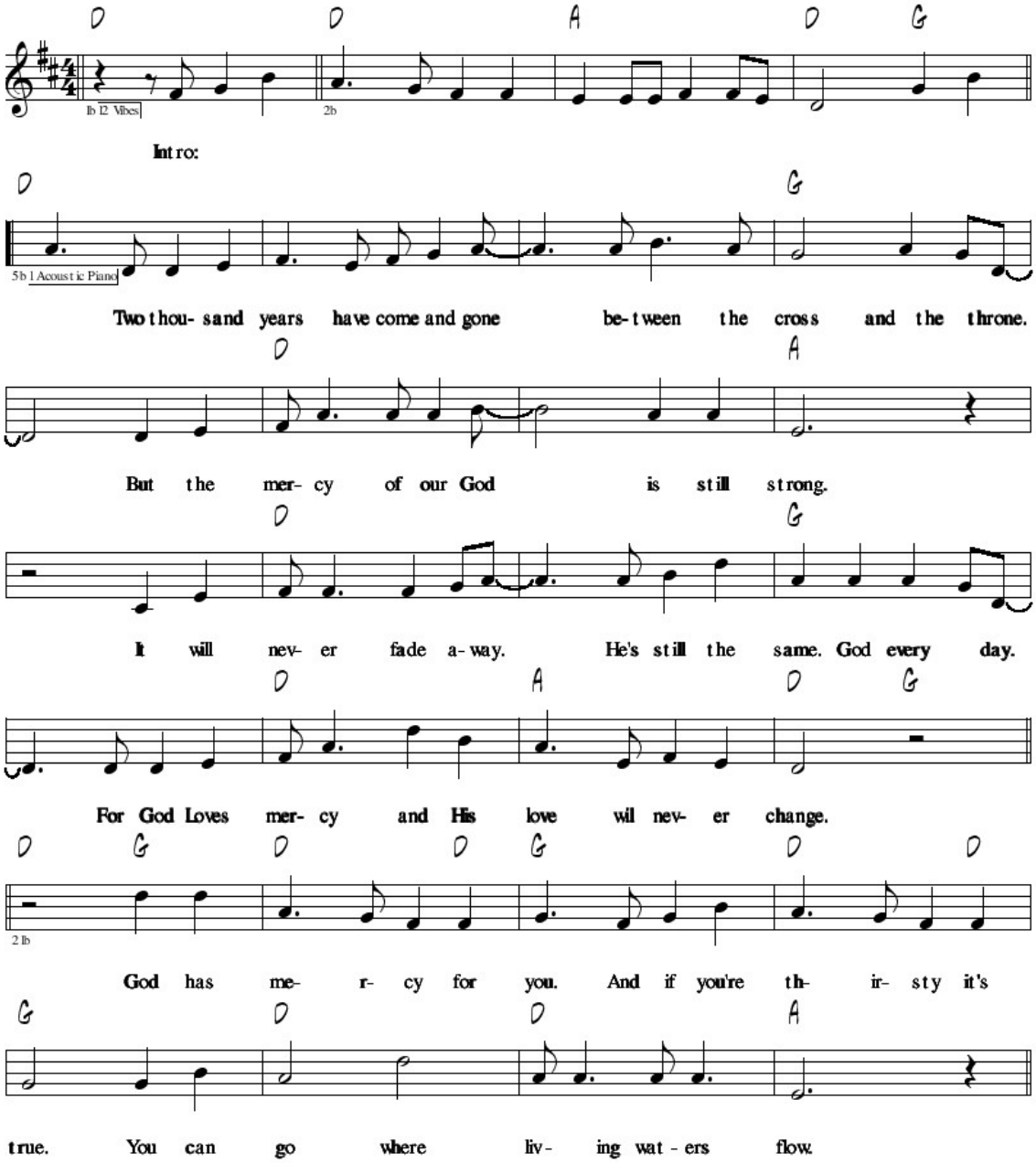
God Loves Mercy* tbd
Be About The Master's Business* tbd
I Talked To An Angel* tbd
Quite A Lovely Day* tbd
A Better Man* tbd
Blue Hills Of Heaven, The* tbd
What A Wonderful Life Over There tbd
Why Don't You Talk To Me? * tbd
Pass It On* tbd
Noah's Ark* tbd 10
Back Porch Swing, The* tbd
Come To Jesus # 227
Christmas Lamb, The 229
Christmas Isn't Christmas Without You * tbd
Christmas Is A Magic Time Of Year* tbd
Santa's Reindeer Fly* tbd
Santa's Visit 240
Rough Edges* 243
On Daddy's Knee* tbd
You Can't Fool God* 251 20
Excellent Is Thy Name, Oh Lord * 254
We Face The Storms Together # tbd
Beyond The Sky # tbd
Story Of The Savior's Love, The tbd
He Knows Your Name* tbd
Passing Years, The # tbd
What A Day That Will Be* 271
Love Can Last Forever # 273
Sorry Girl # 274
Where the Heart Shall Weep No More 276 30
Our Favorite Song # tbd
Pray For Me (Oh, For The Love Of Jesus)* tbd
You Can't Take It With You tbd
Our God Is Able* tbd
While We Have This Time Together* tbd
I'm Coming Home # tbd
My Song Comes From You Lord # tbd
Semi-Rider* tbd

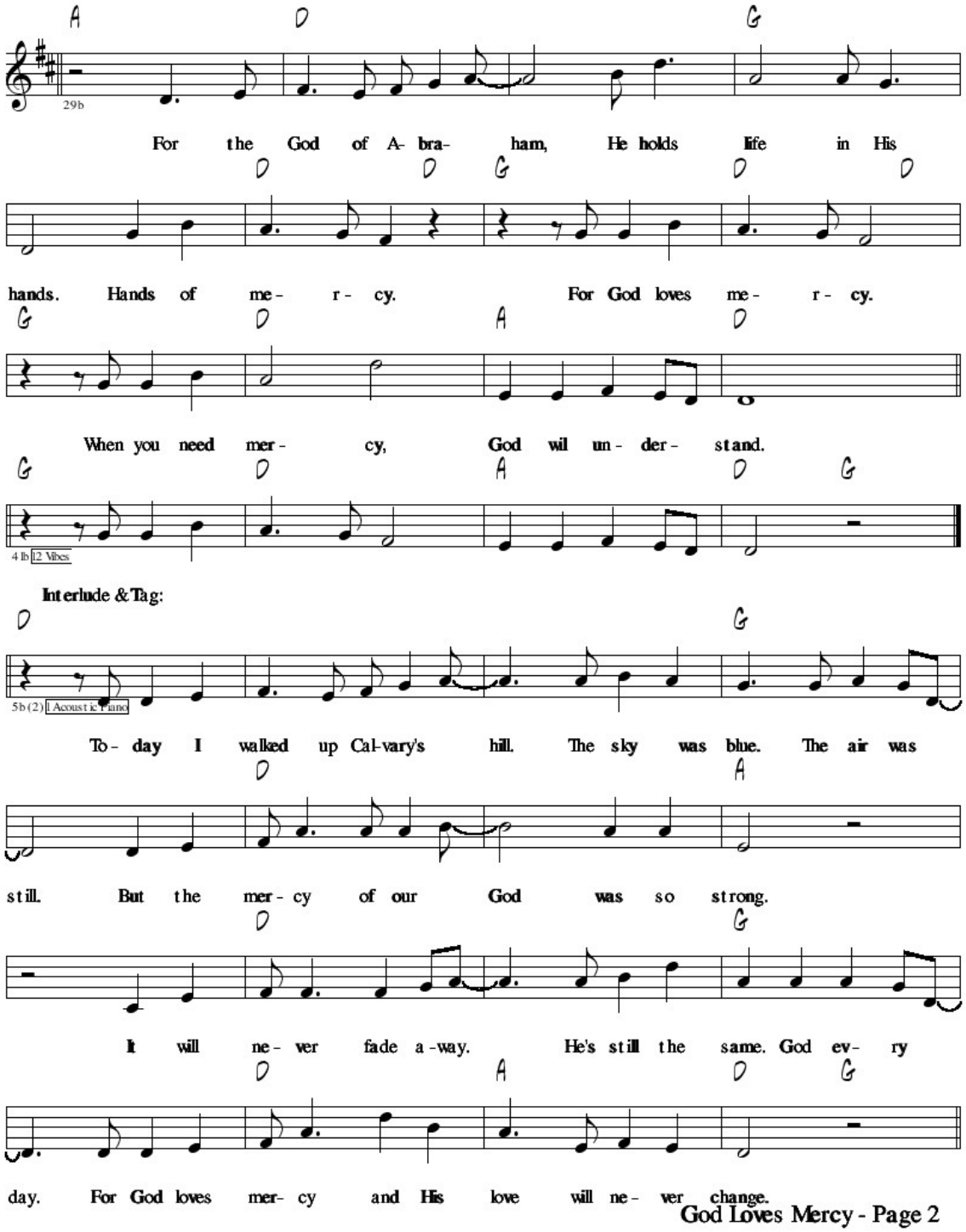
Gospel Road Still Leads Me On, The* tbd
Jesus Is Calling Again # tbd 40
A Happy Melody # tbd
There'll Never Be Another You (Birdie) tbd
I've Got the Son In My Eyes tbd
It's Harvest Time # tbd
His Love # tbd
I'm On The Gospel Road tbd
I'll Make A Way When There Is None # tbd
This Is The Day That Jesus Has Made tbd
We're Going Over 331
Thank God I've Been Redeemed tbd 50
Joy Of Living, The # tbd
Joy In The Presence Of The Lord tbd
Behold The Sparrow # tbd
One Chance # tbd
Make Your Reservation tbd
New Beginnings # 343
Happy We Will Be tbd
Where Have They Gone? tbd
Look At Calvary # tbd
Someday # tbd 60
Gift Of Life, The tbd
Lord, It's Me Again tbd
Come Along With Me tbd
I Want To Follow Jesus tbd
You Will Love Everybody 368
He Holds Tomorrow* tbd
Heavenly Highways tbd
Dance Party Tonight tbd
Good Old Days, The tbd
More Like You tbd 70
By The Power Of His Hand tbd
We're In Love (Mandi & Wade's Song) 386
Jade's Song # tbd
Beautiful Baleigh # tbd
Jalyn, Have A Lovely Life tbd*
Briar's Lullaby Song (Sleep Little Briar) # tbd
Little Children # tbd
Good News! tbd
A Place Beyond The Pain # tbd
Because He Cared tbd 80
The old Church tbd
Ham And Cheese tbd 82

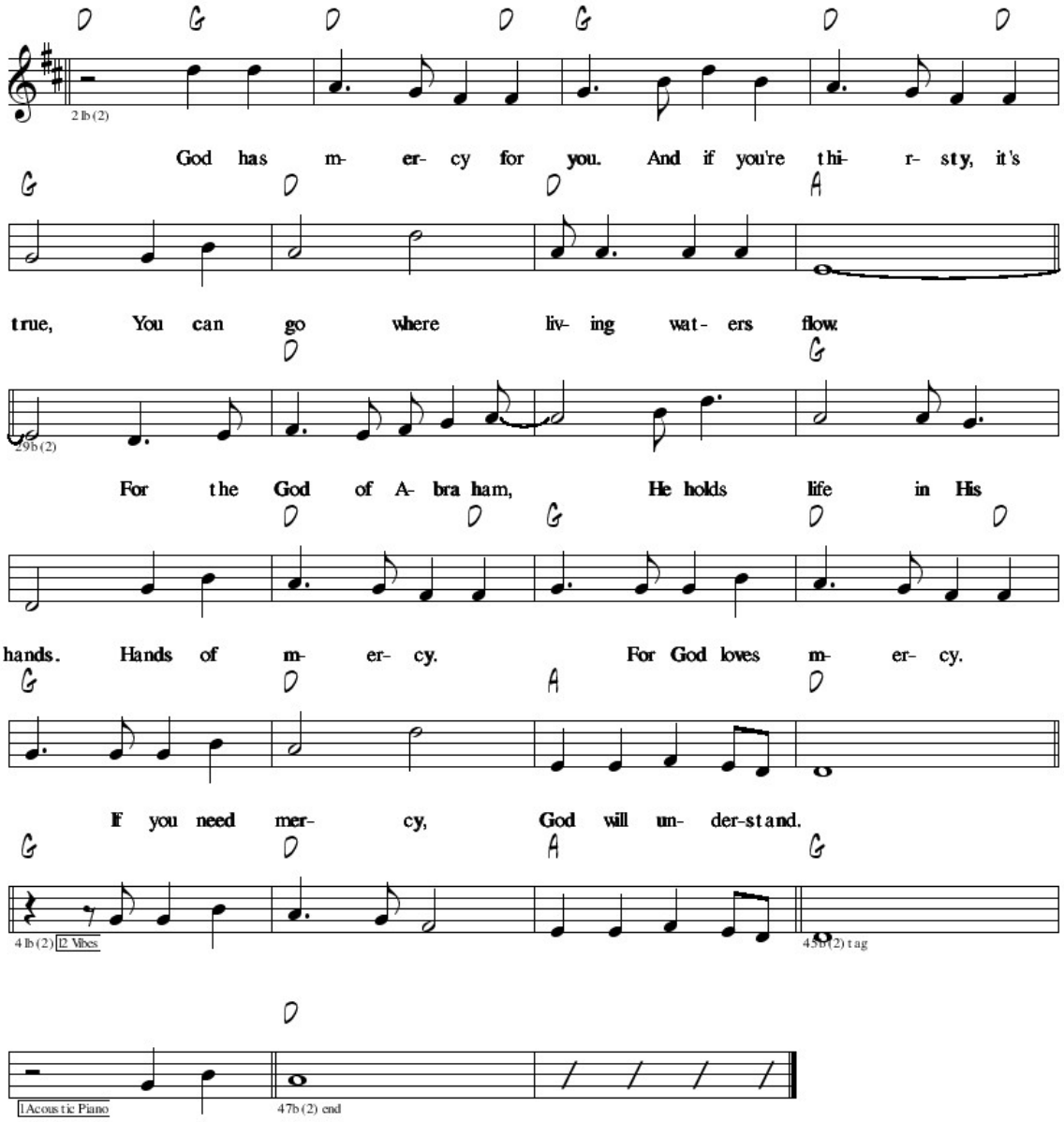
God Loves Mercy

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1996 Words & Music

Tempo = 105



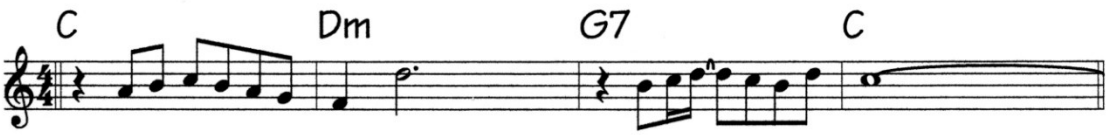

A D G
29b
For the God of A- bra- ham, He holds life in His
D D G D D
hands. Hands of me- r- cy. For God loves me- r- cy.
G D A D
When you need mer- cy, God wil un- der- stand.
G D A D G
4 lb 12 Vibes
Interlude & Tag:
D G
5b (2) 1 Acoustic Piano
To- day I walked up Cal-vary's hill. The sky was blue. The air was
D A
still. But the mer- cy of our God was so strong.
D G
It will ne- ver fade a -way. He's still the same. God ev- ry
D A D G
day. For God loves mer- cy and His love will ne- ver change.


D G D D G D D
2 lb (2)
God has m- er- cy for you. And if you're thi- r- sty, it's
G D D A
true, You can go where liv- ing wat- ers flow.
D G
29b (2)
For the God of A- bra ham, He holds life in His
D D G D D
hands. Hands of m- er- cy. For God loves m- er- cy.
G D A D
If you need mer- cy, God will un- der-stand.
G D A G
4 lb (2)
12 Vibes
45b (2) tag
D
1 Acoustic Piano
47b (2) end

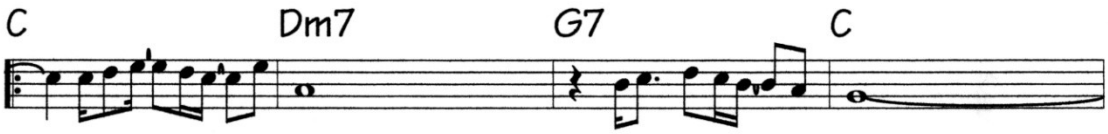
Be About The Master's Business

By: Lyndell R. Martin

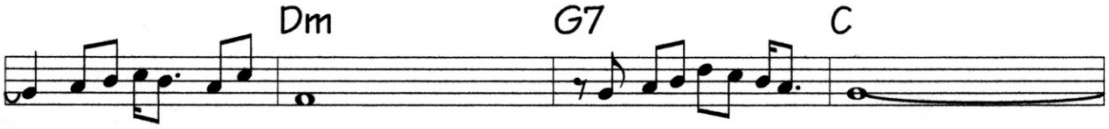
Tempo = 85



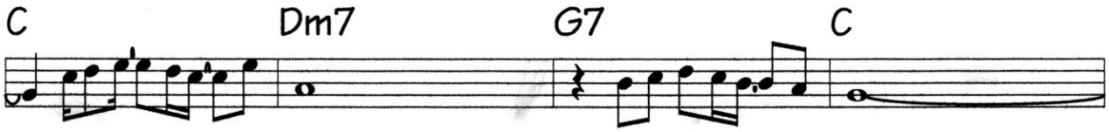
Intro:



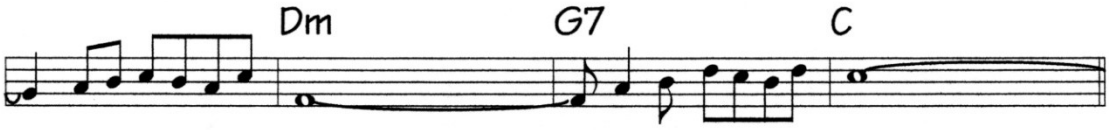
Lit-tle child-ren in the street, search-ing for a bite to eat.
Peo-ple liv-ing in the cold. Some are young and some are old.



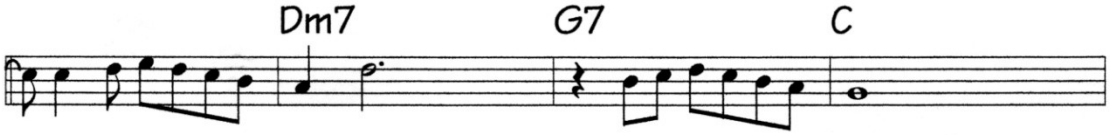
Blind men sit-ting at our feet, but it is we who can-not see.
Je-sus loves them. This we know. Still, our hearts are strange-ly cold.



Look a-round you cho-sen ones, at the work there to be done.
Lost and die-ing eve-ry where. Emp-ty hearts and vac-ant stares.

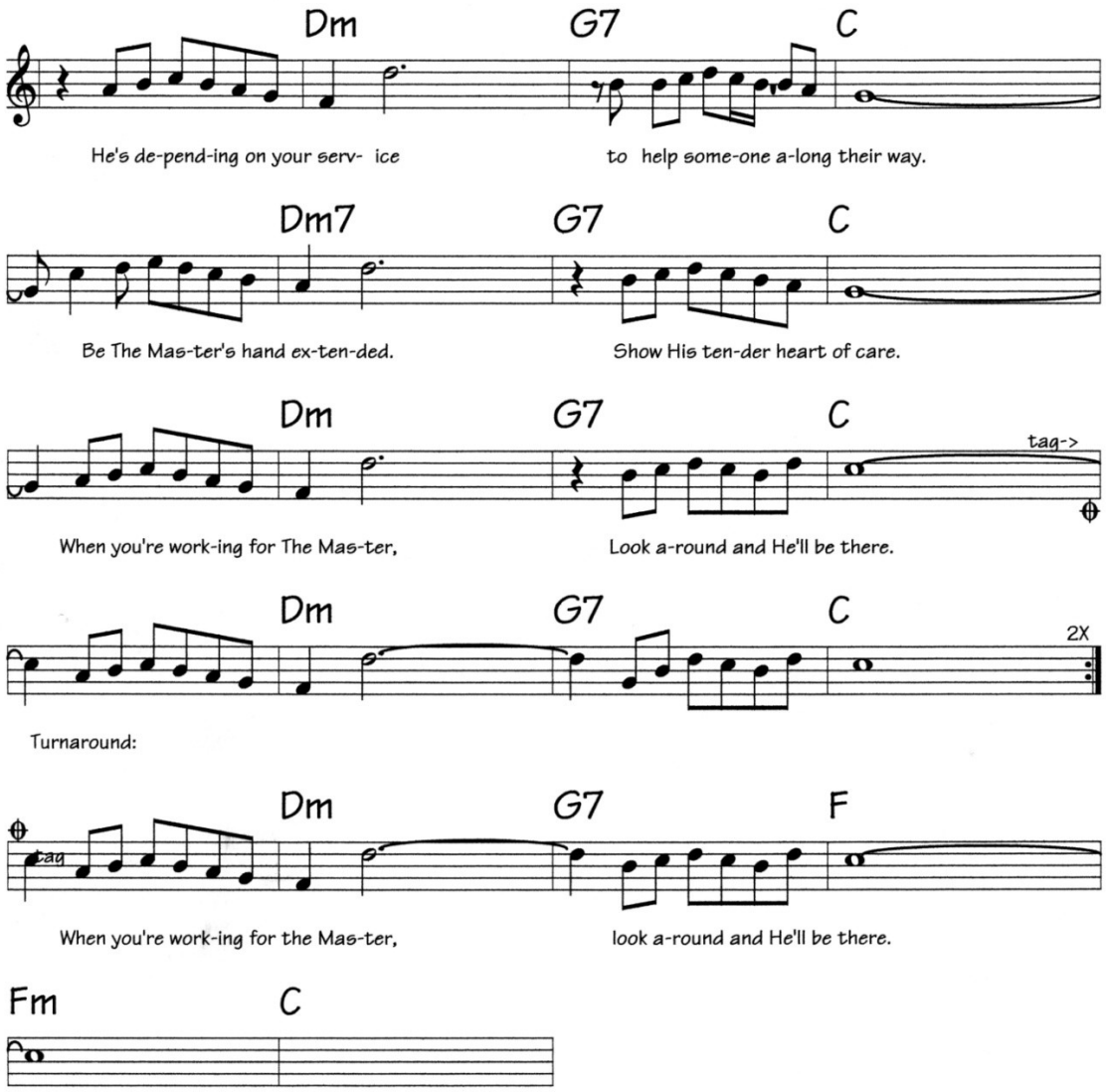


There are bat-tles to be won. We have on-ly just be-gun.
They look a-round. There's no-one there. On- ly Je-sus seems to care.



Be a-bout The Mas-ter's busi-ness. Be at work for Him each day.

© 1988

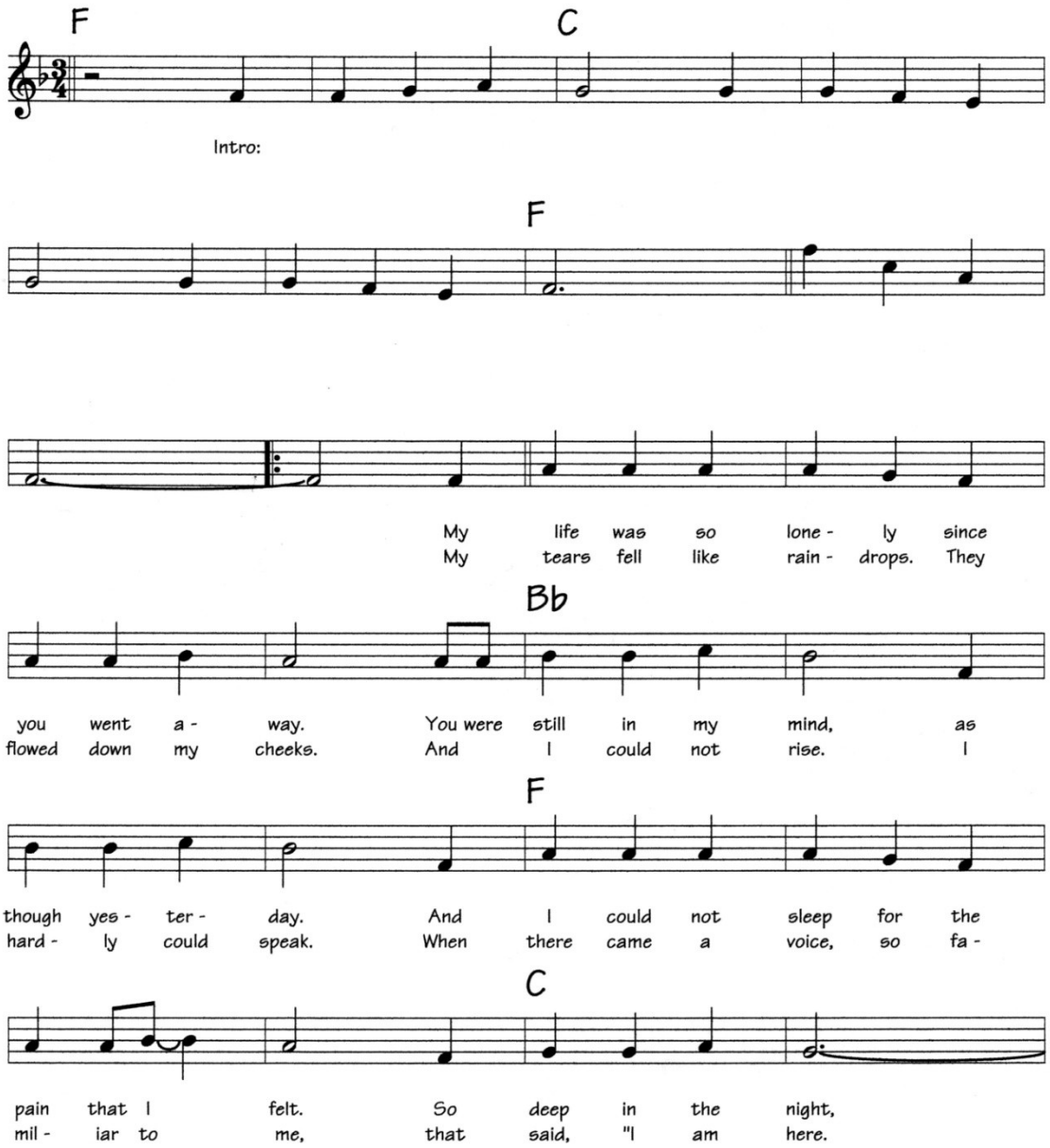


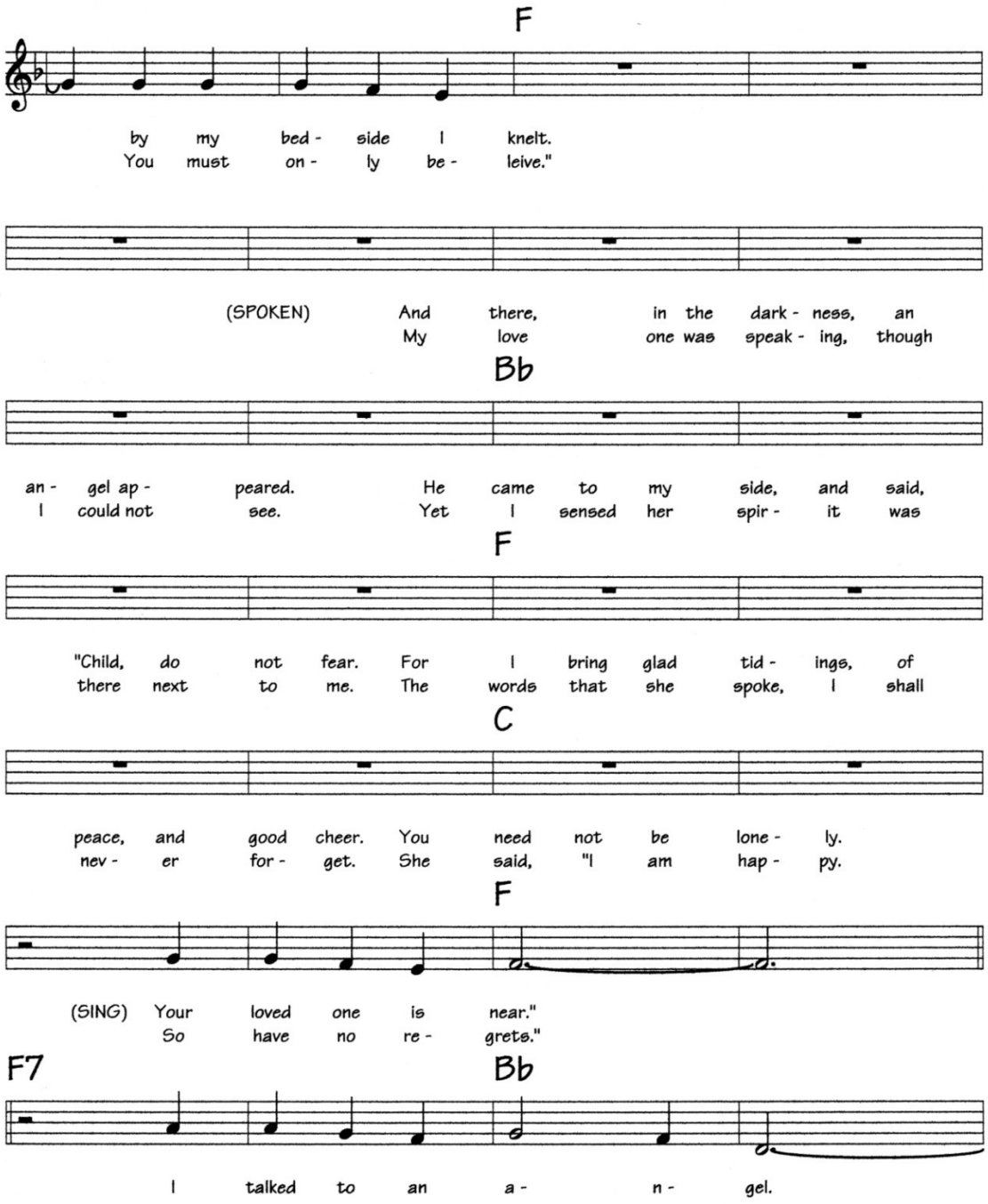
Be About The Master's Business - Page 2

I Talked To An Angel

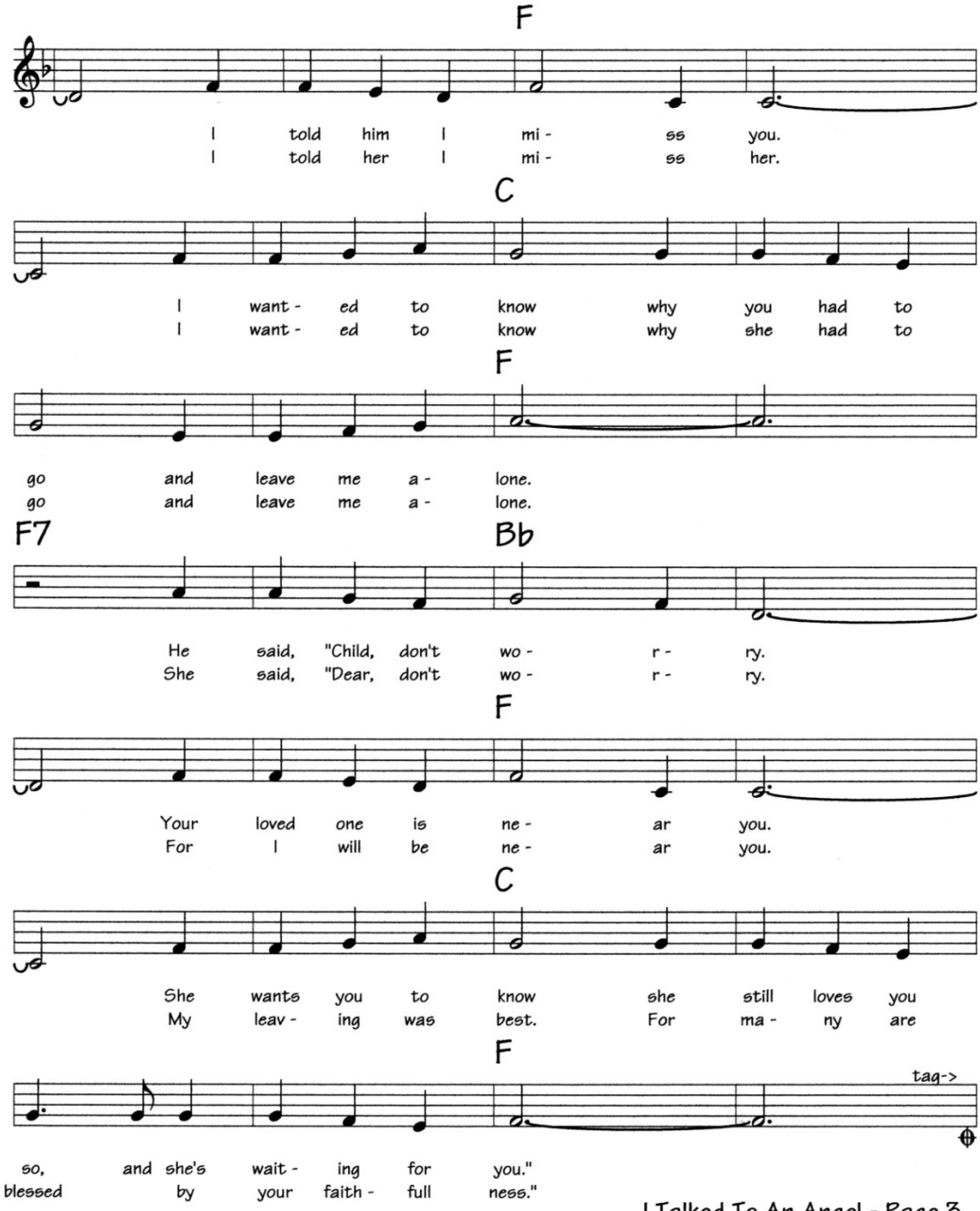
By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1995

Tempo = 133

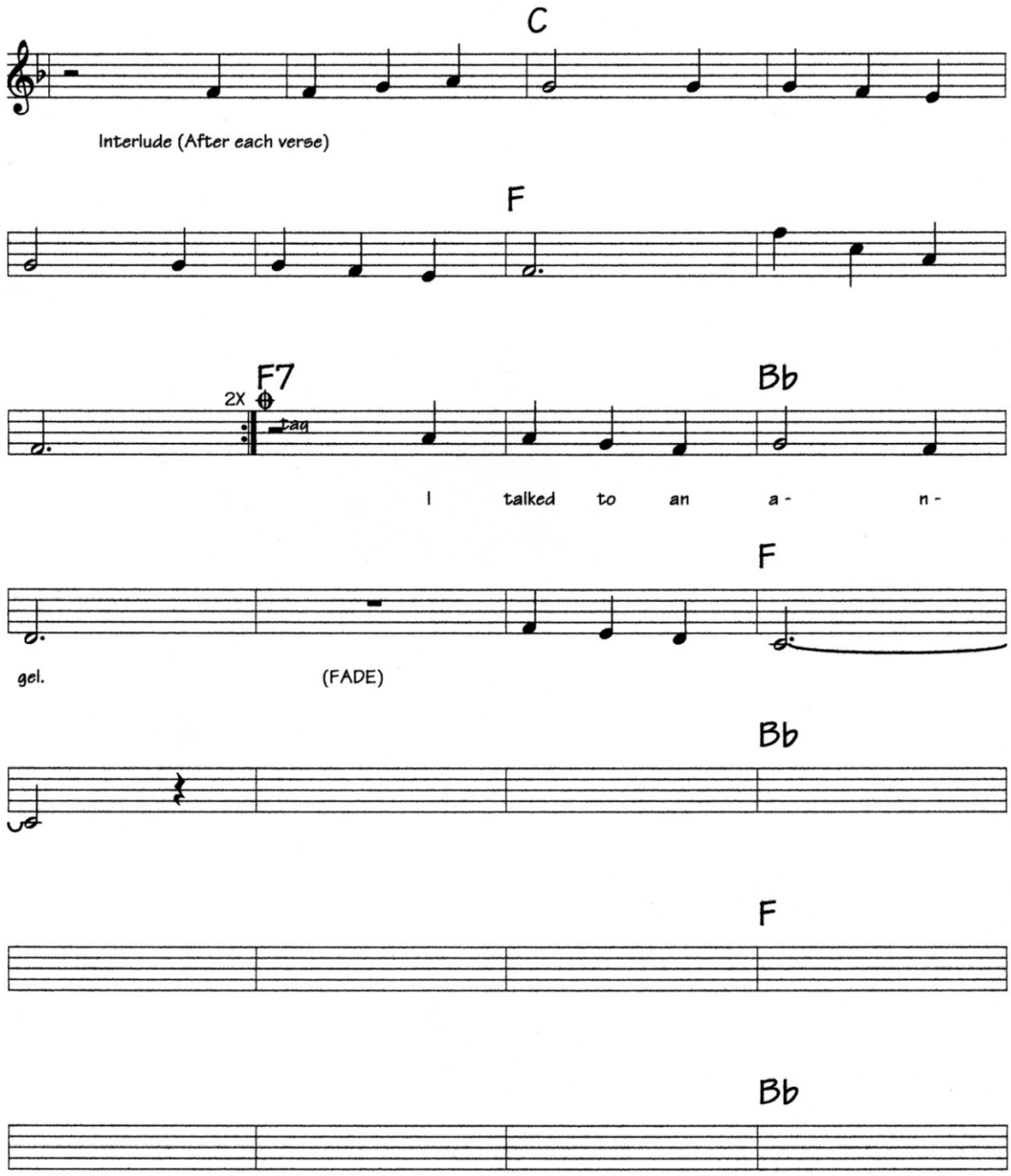




I Talked To An Angel - Page 2



I Talked To An Angel - Page 3

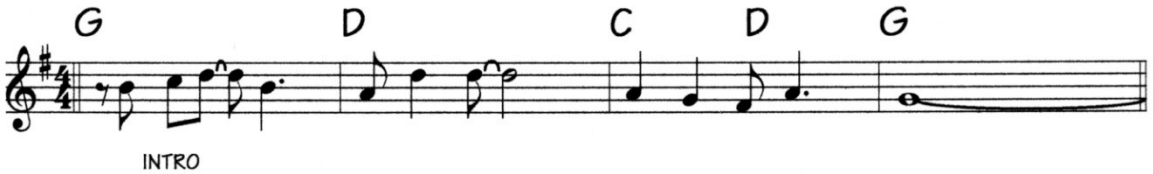


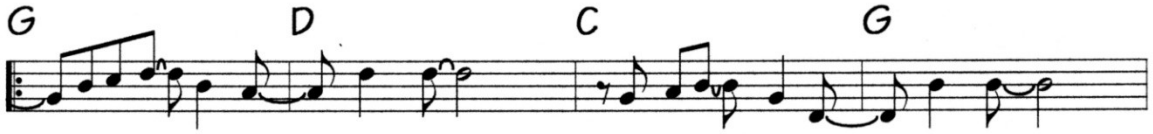
I Talked To An Angel - Page 4

QUITE A LOVELY DAY

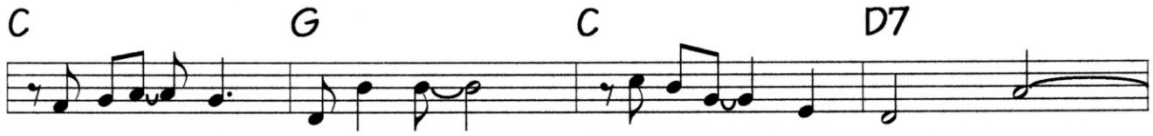
Medium tempo Country Rock+
Tempo = 117

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 2010

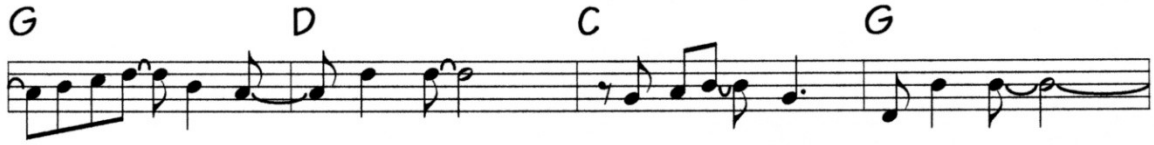




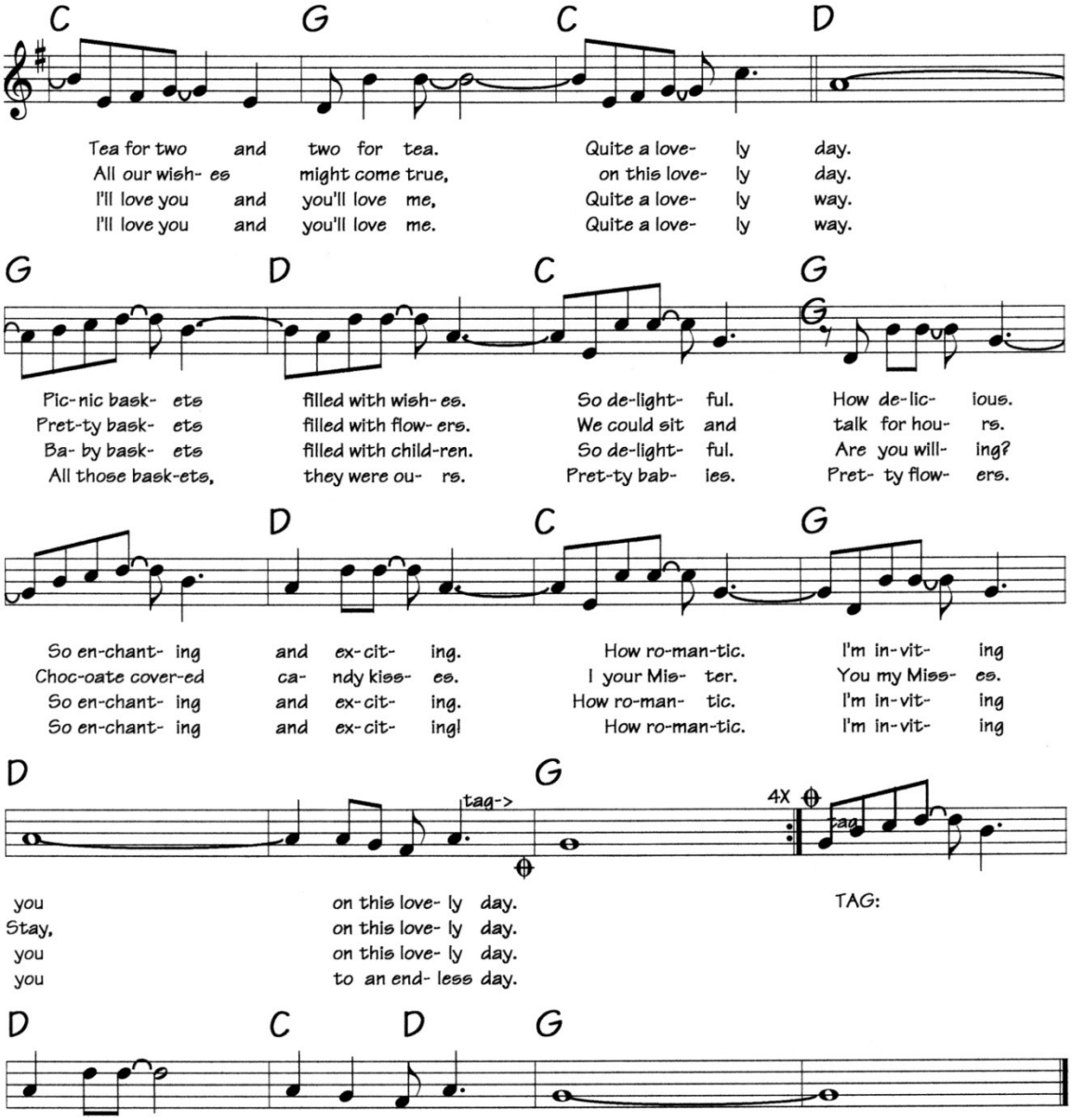
Would you like to walk with me? Take a stroll down by the sea?
Would you like to be my friend? Who could say how that might end?
Would you like to mar- ry me? We could raise a fam- i- ly.
Would you like to stay with me? Down through all e- tern- i- ty?



We could share a cup of tea. Spend the day to- geth- er.
Hea- ven knows, so let's be- gin. Spend some time to- geth- er.
Make a home down by the sea. Share our lives to- geth- er.
Share our love so ten- der- ly. All the while to- geth- er.



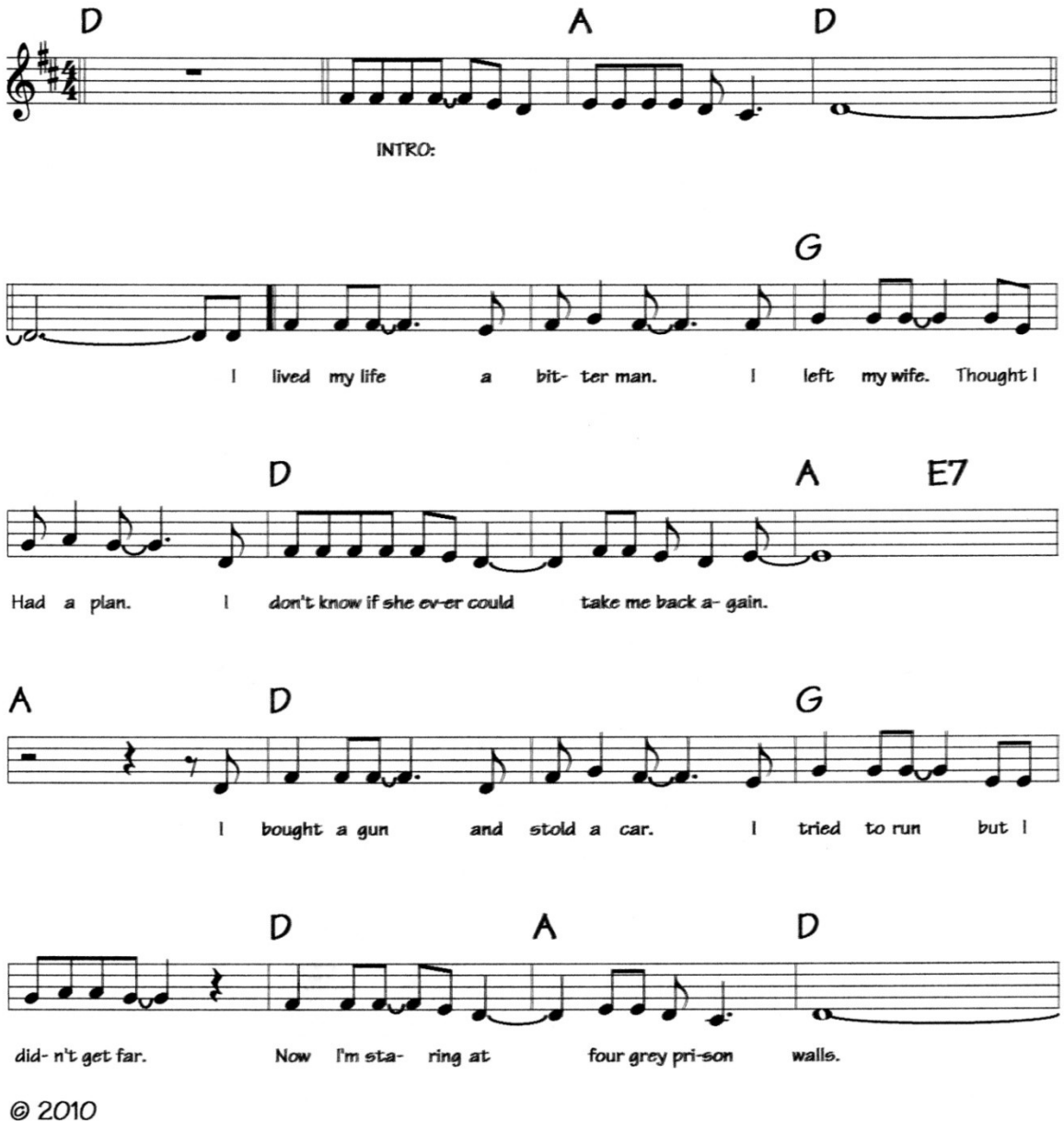
It would be just you and me. Con- ver-sa- tion by the sea.
I could share my thoughts with you. You could give your point of view.
Have some child-ren. Two or three. May- be more, if you a- gree.
We'll be with our fam- i- ly. Strol-ling by the Crys- tal sea.


C G C D
Tea for two and two for tea. Quite a love- ly day.
All our wish- es might come true, on this love- ly day.
I'll love you and you'll love me, Quite a love- ly way.
I'll love you and you'll love me. Quite a love- ly way.
G D C G
Pic-nic bask- ets filled with wish- es. So de-light- ful. How de-lic- ious.
Pret-ty bask- ets filled with flow- ers. We could sit and talk for hou- rs.
Ba- by bask- ets filled with child-ren. So de-light- ful. Are you will- ing?
All those bask-ets, they were ou- rs. Pret-ty bab- ies. Pret- ty flow- ers.
D C G
So en-chant- ing and ex- cit- ing. How ro-man-tic. I'm in-vit- ing
Choc-oate cover-ed ca- ndy kiss- es. I your Mis- ter. You my Miss- es.
So en-chant- ing and ex- cit- ing. How ro-man- tic. I'm in-vit- ing
So en-chant- ing and ex- cit- ing! How ro-man-tic. I'm in-vit- ing
D G
tag->
4X
tag
you on this love- ly day. TAG:
Stay, on this love- ly day.
you on this love- ly day.
you to an end- less day.
D C D G

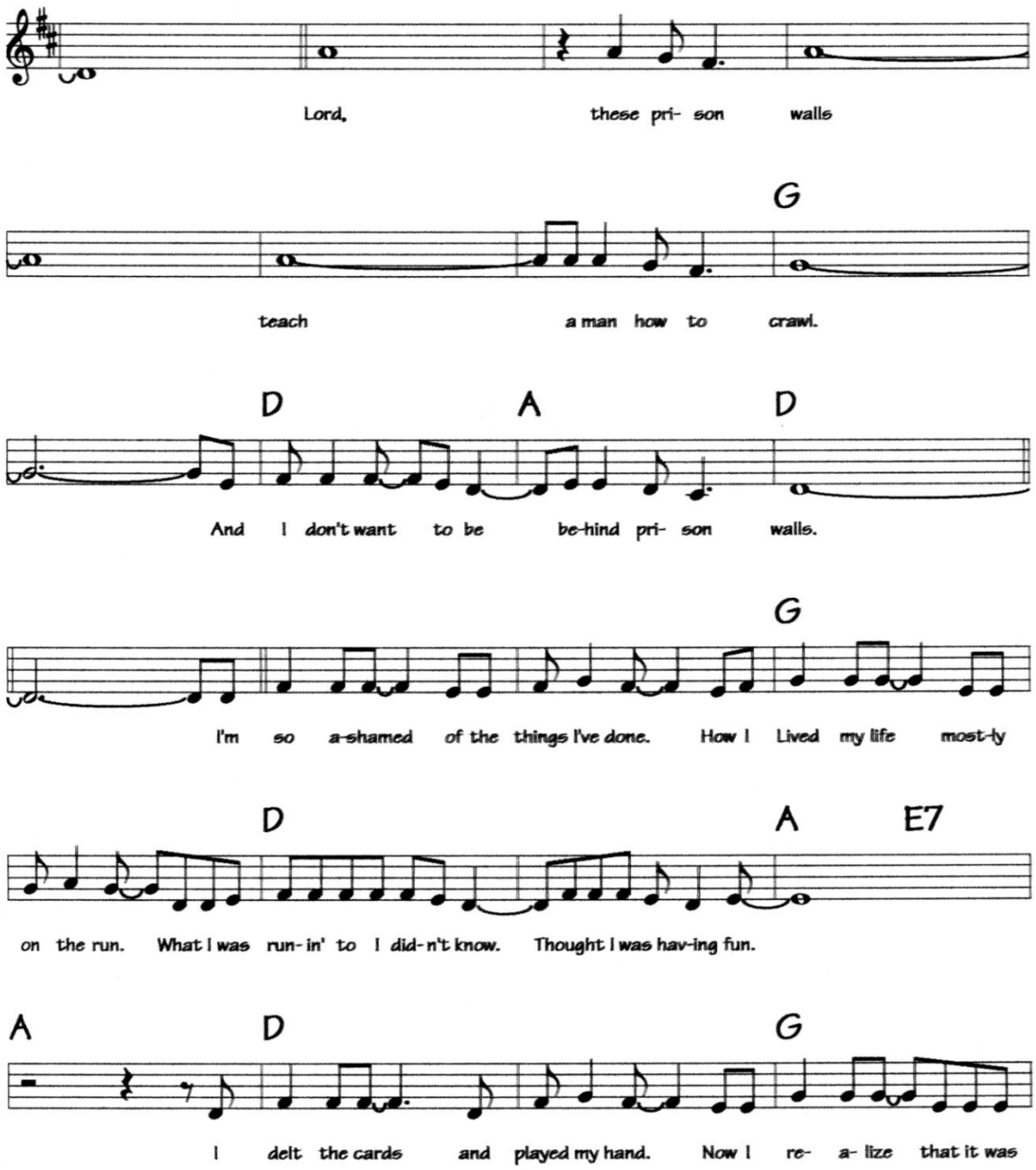
A BETTER MAN

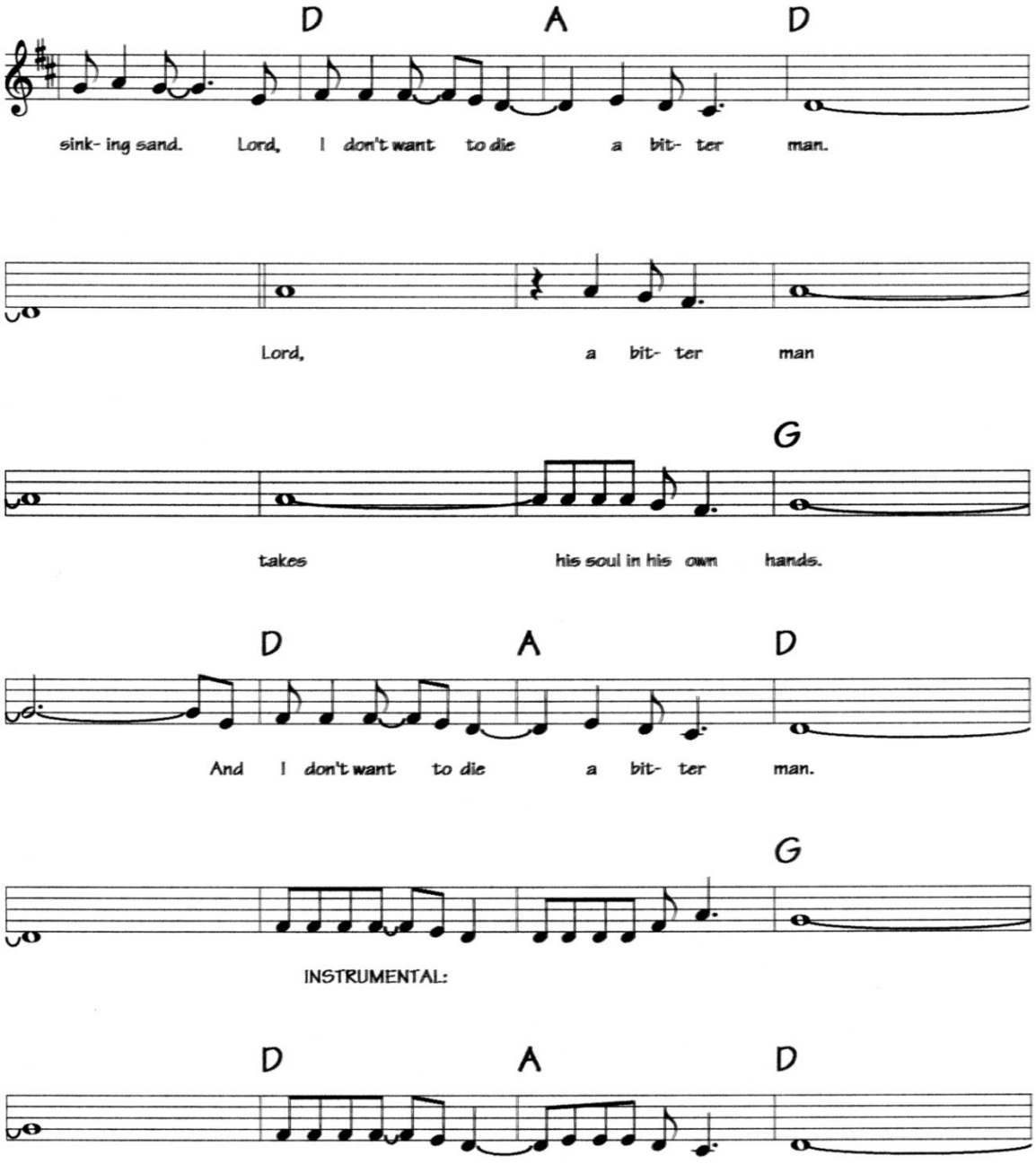
By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 2010

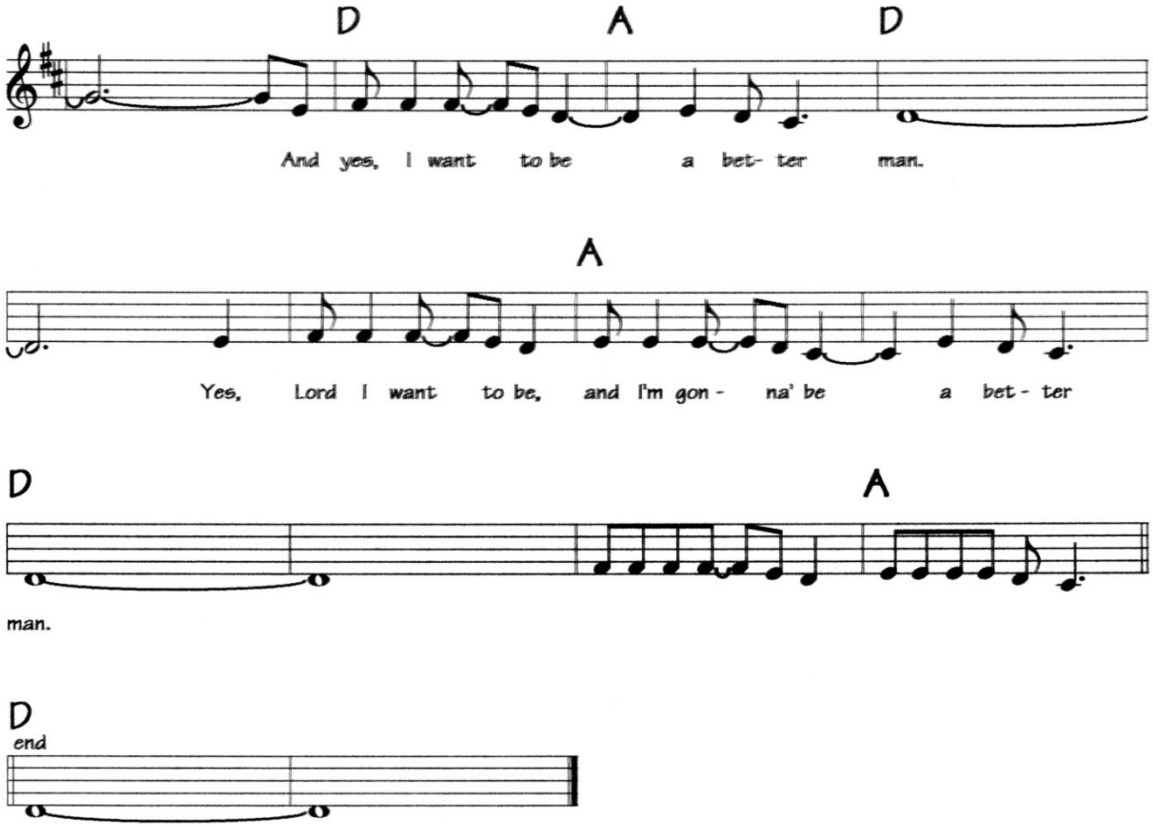
Tempo = 130



© 2010


Lord, these pri- son walls
G
teach a man how to crawl.
D A D
And I don't want to be be-hind pri- son walls.
G
I'm so a-shamed of the things I've done. How I Lived my life most-ly
D A E7
on the run. What I was run- in' to I did- n't know. Thought I was hav-ing fun.
A D G
I delt the cards and played my hand. Now I re- a- lize that it was

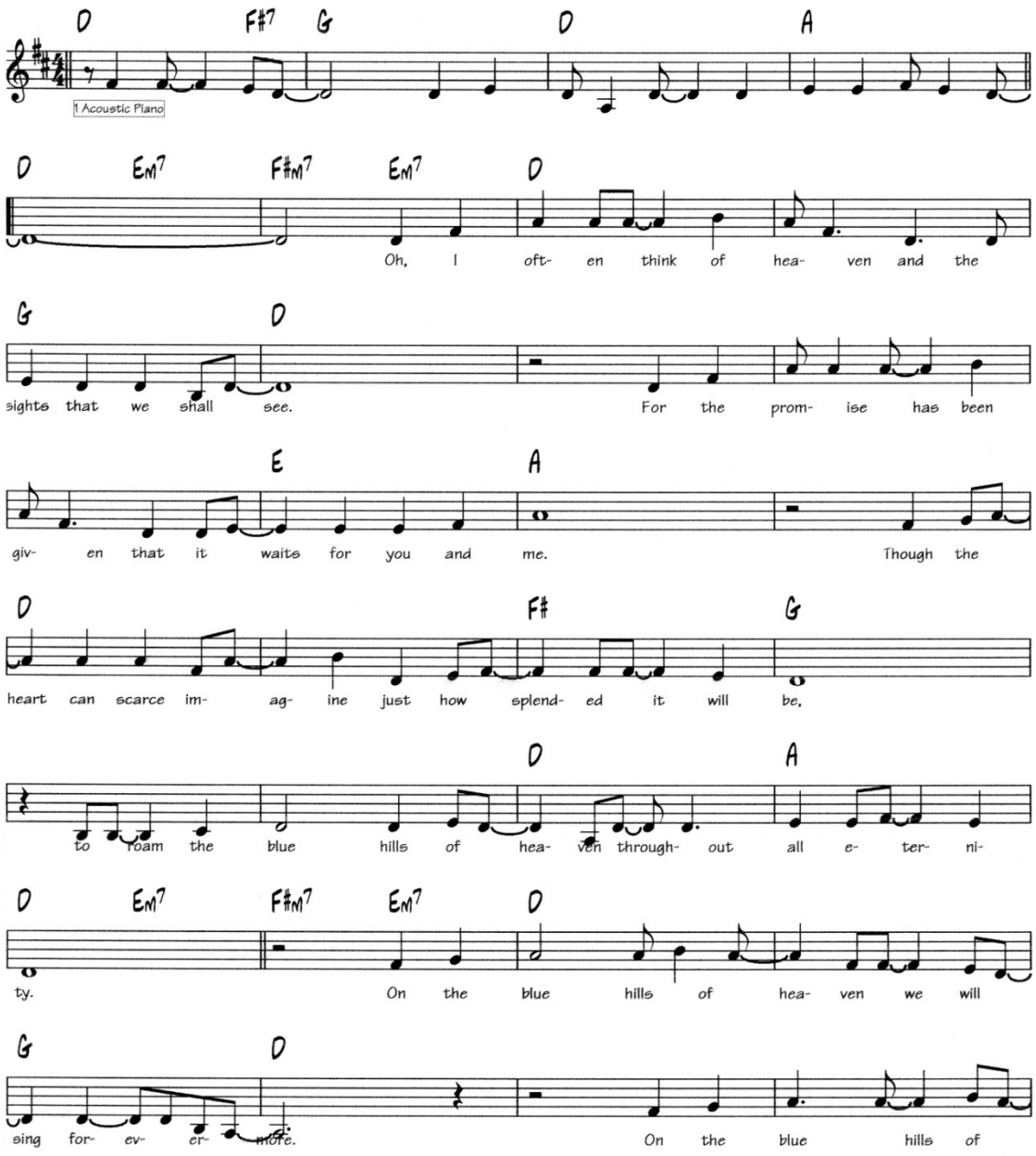

D A D
sink- ing sand. Lord, I don't want to die a bit- ter man.
Lord, a bit- ter man
G
takes his soul in his own hands.
D A D
And I don't want to die a bit- ter man.
G
INSTRUMENTAL:
D A D

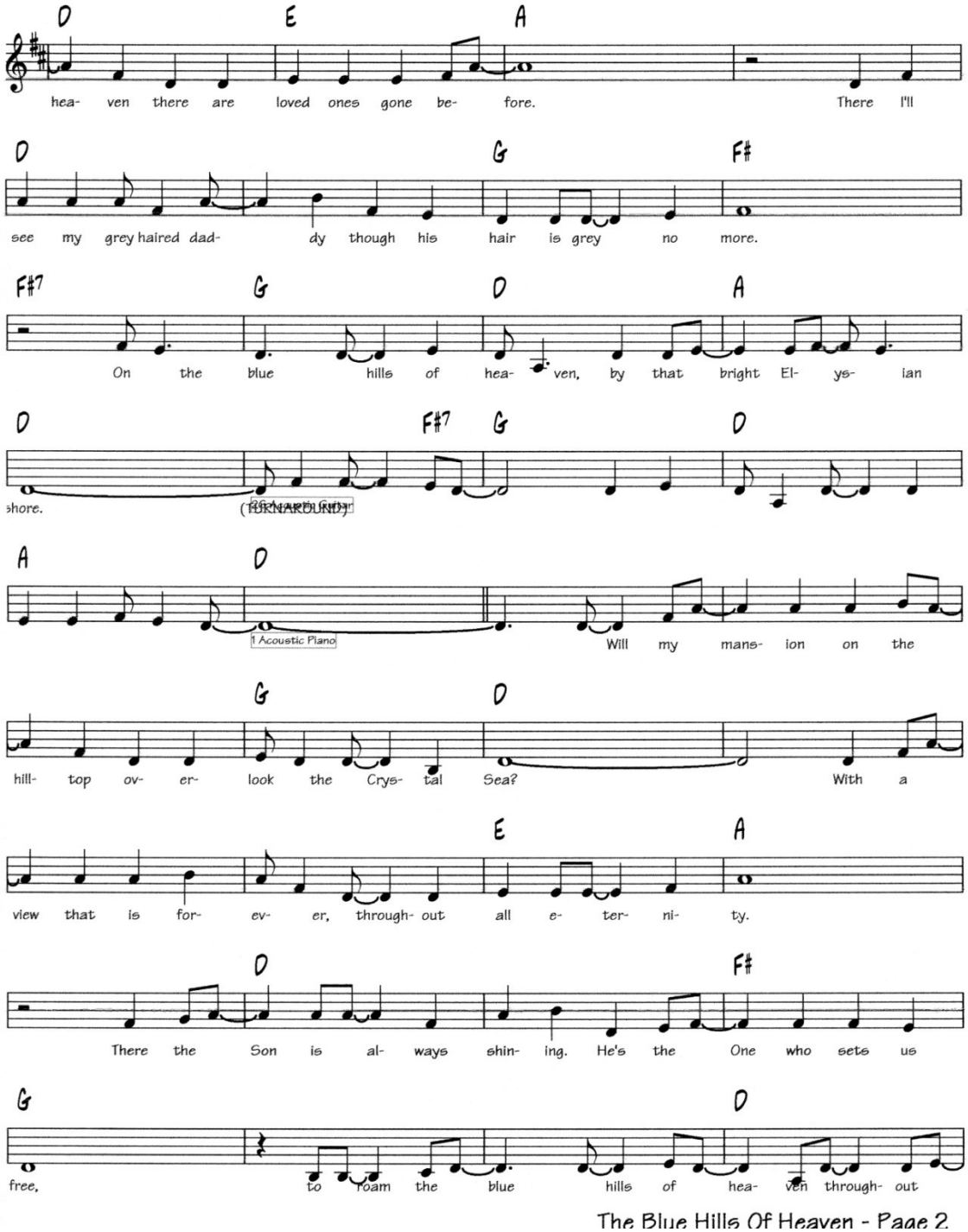

D A D
And yes, I want to be a bet- ter man.
A
Yes, Lord I want to be, and I'm gon - na' be a bet - ter
D A
man.
D
end

The Blue Hills Of Heaven

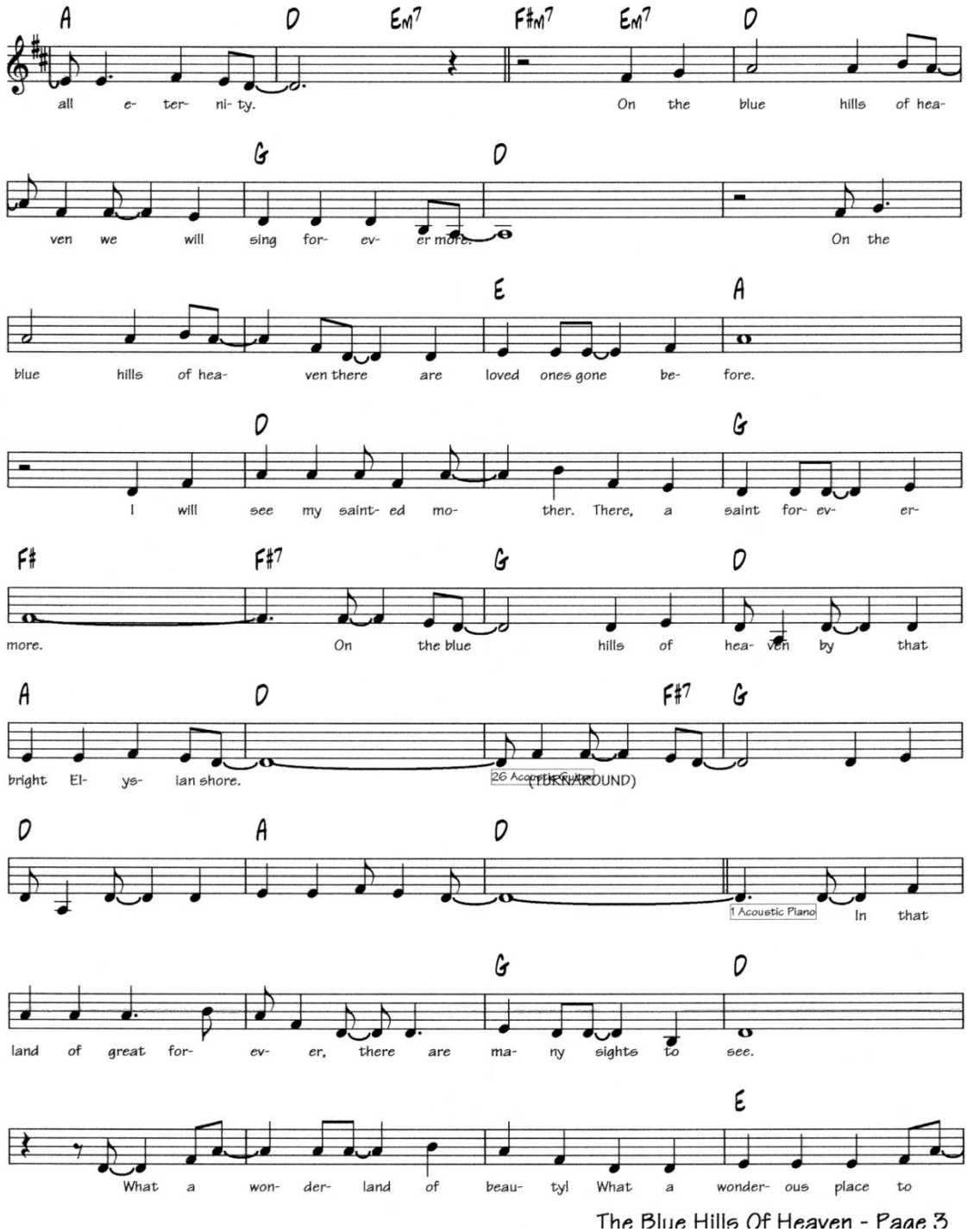
By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 2006 Words & Music

Tempo = 160

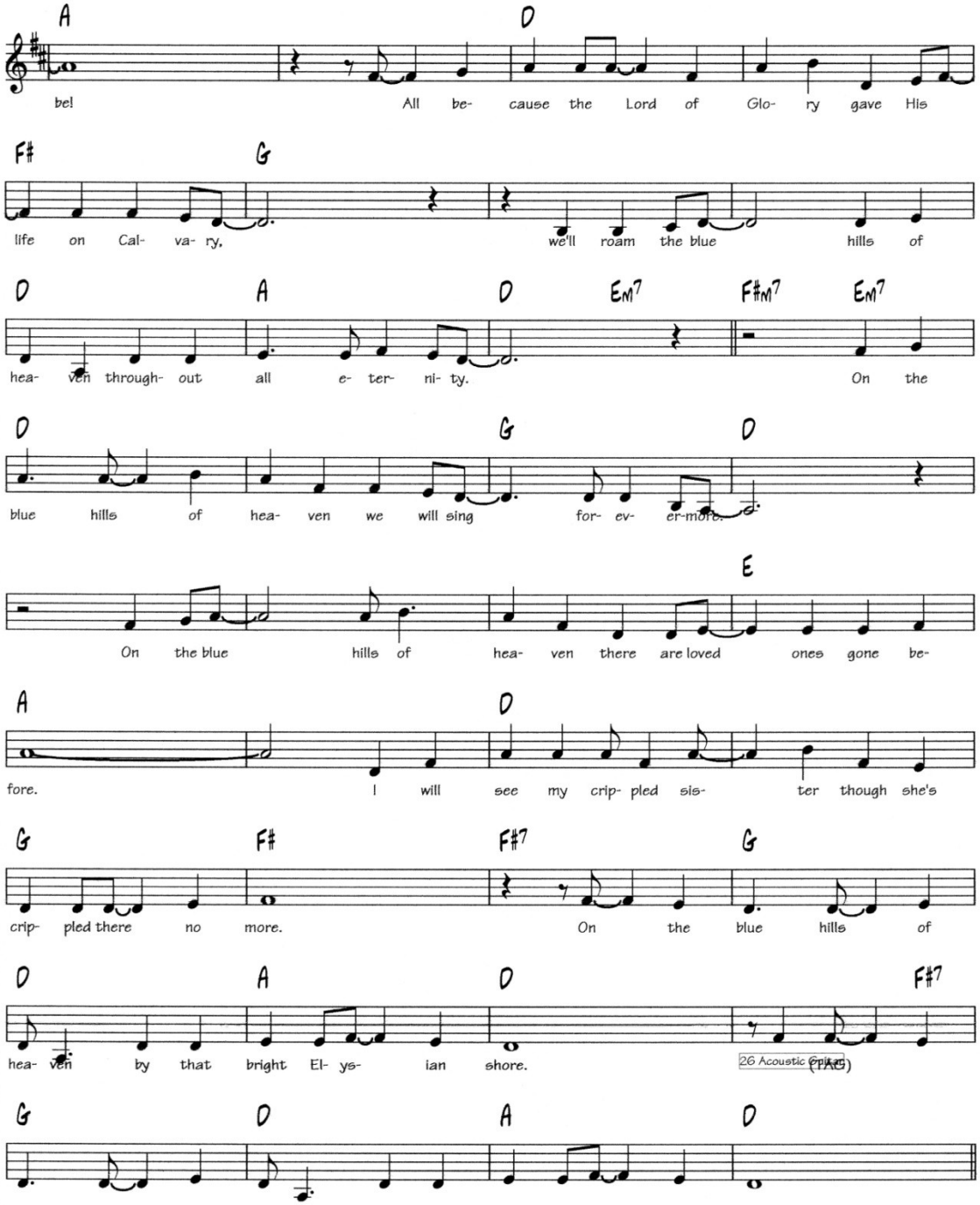




The Blue Hills Of Heaven - Page 2



The Blue Hills Of Heaven - Page 3

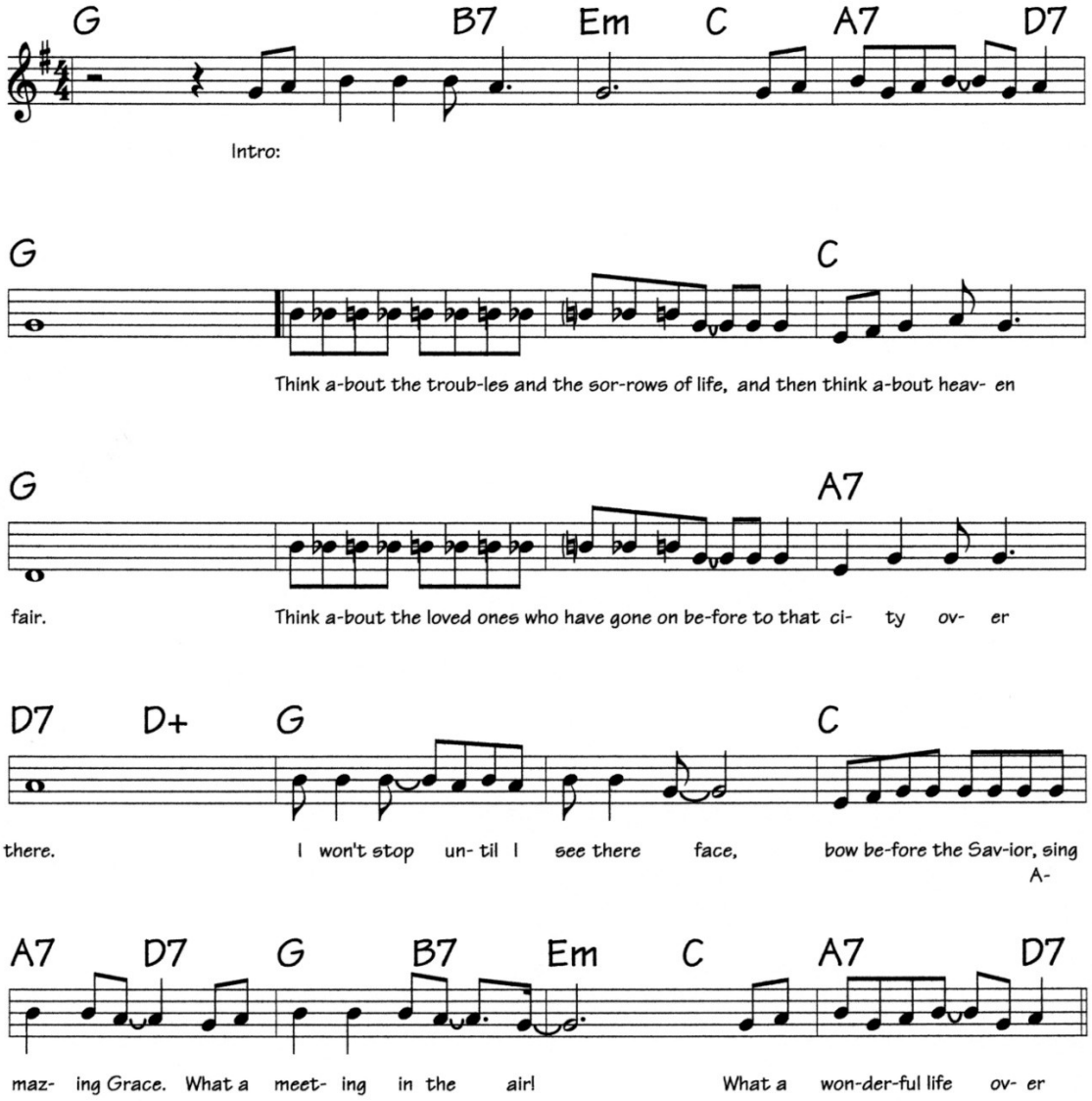


The Blue Hills Of Heaven - Page 4

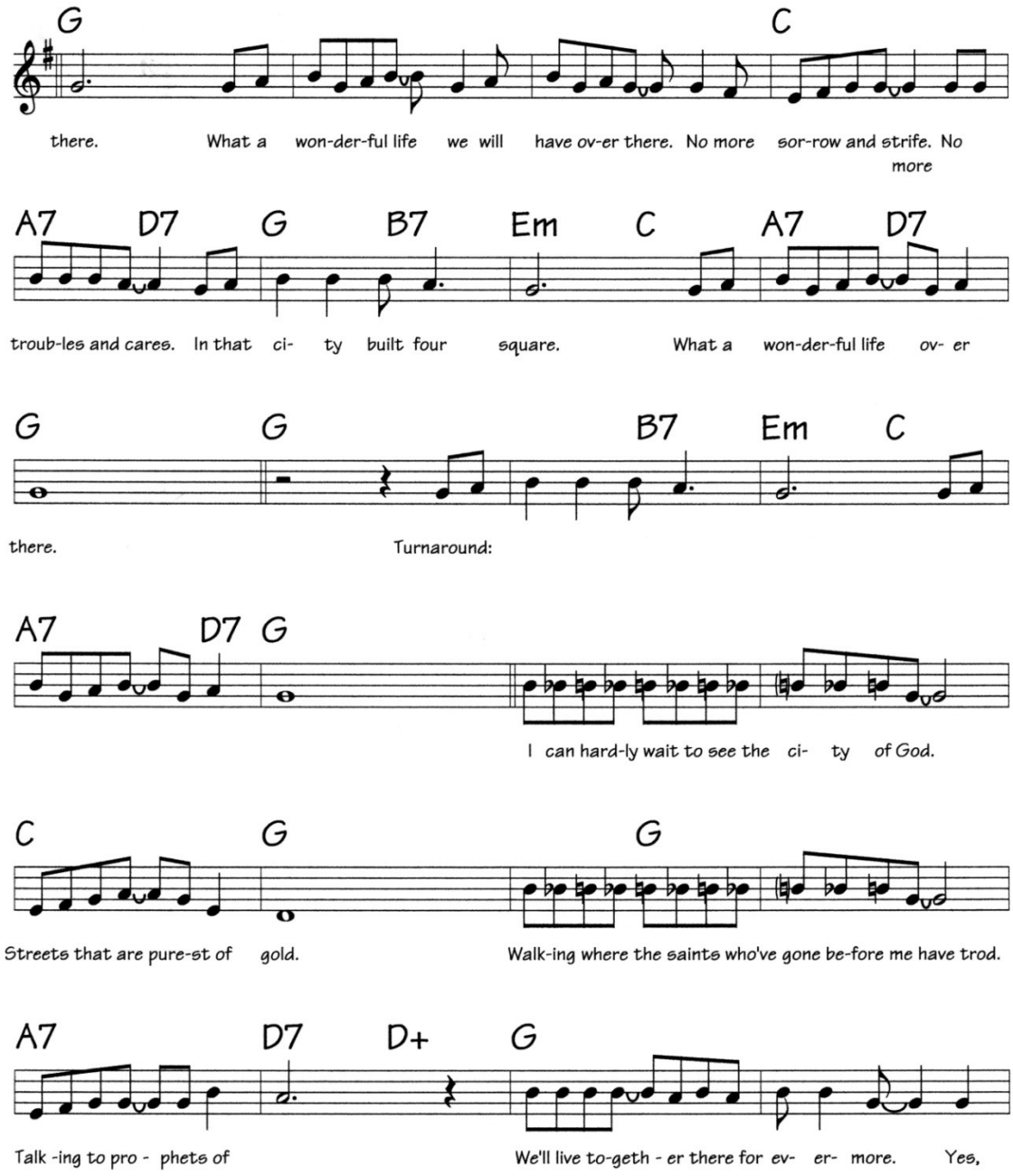
WHAT A WONDERFUL LIFE OVER THERE

By: Lyndell R. Martin

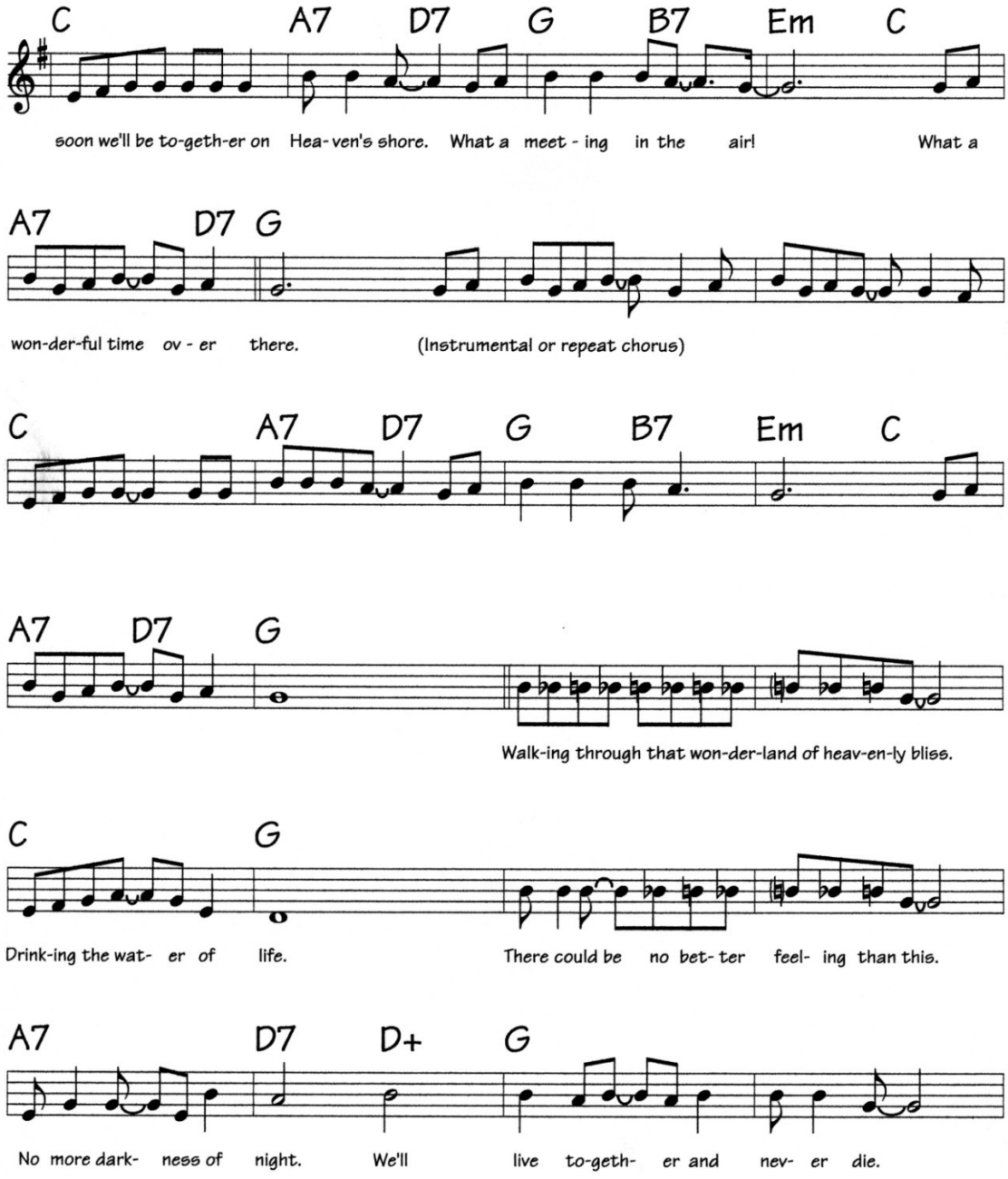
Tempo = 128



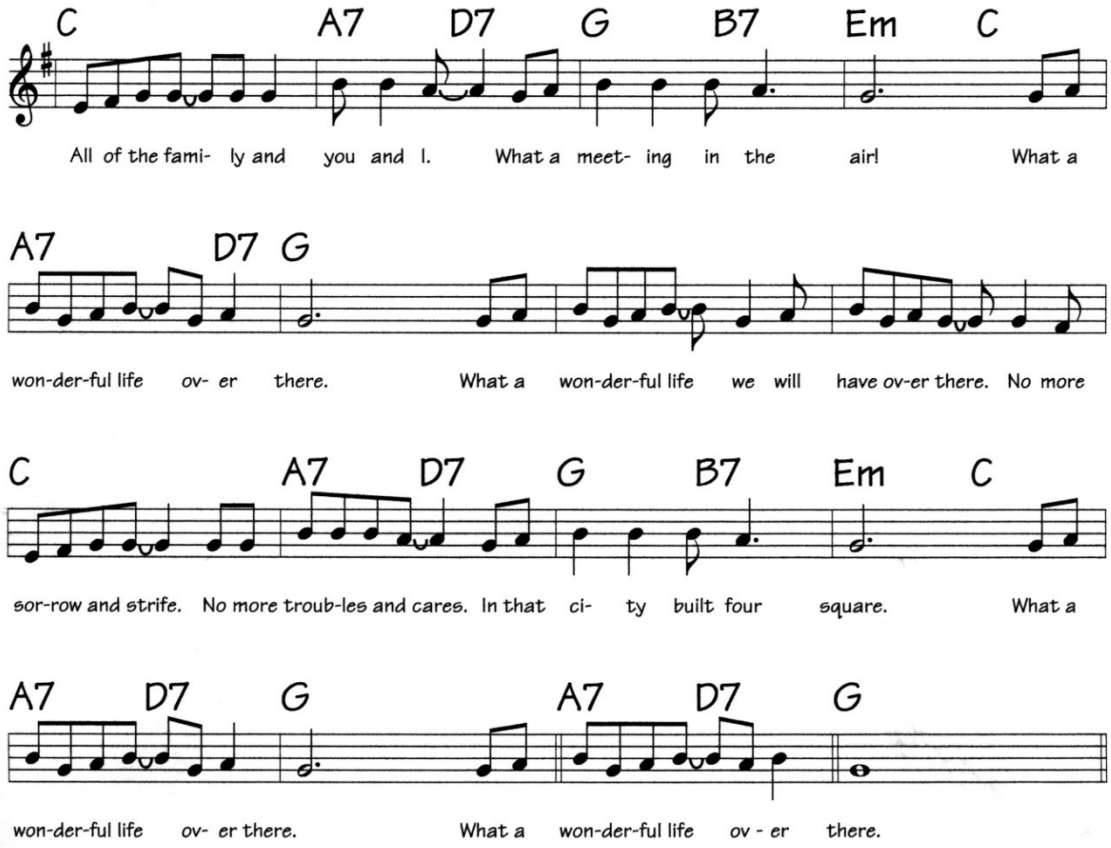
© 1988



WHAT A WONDERFUL LIFE OVER THERE - Page 2



WHAT A WONDERFUL LIFE OVER THERE - Page 3

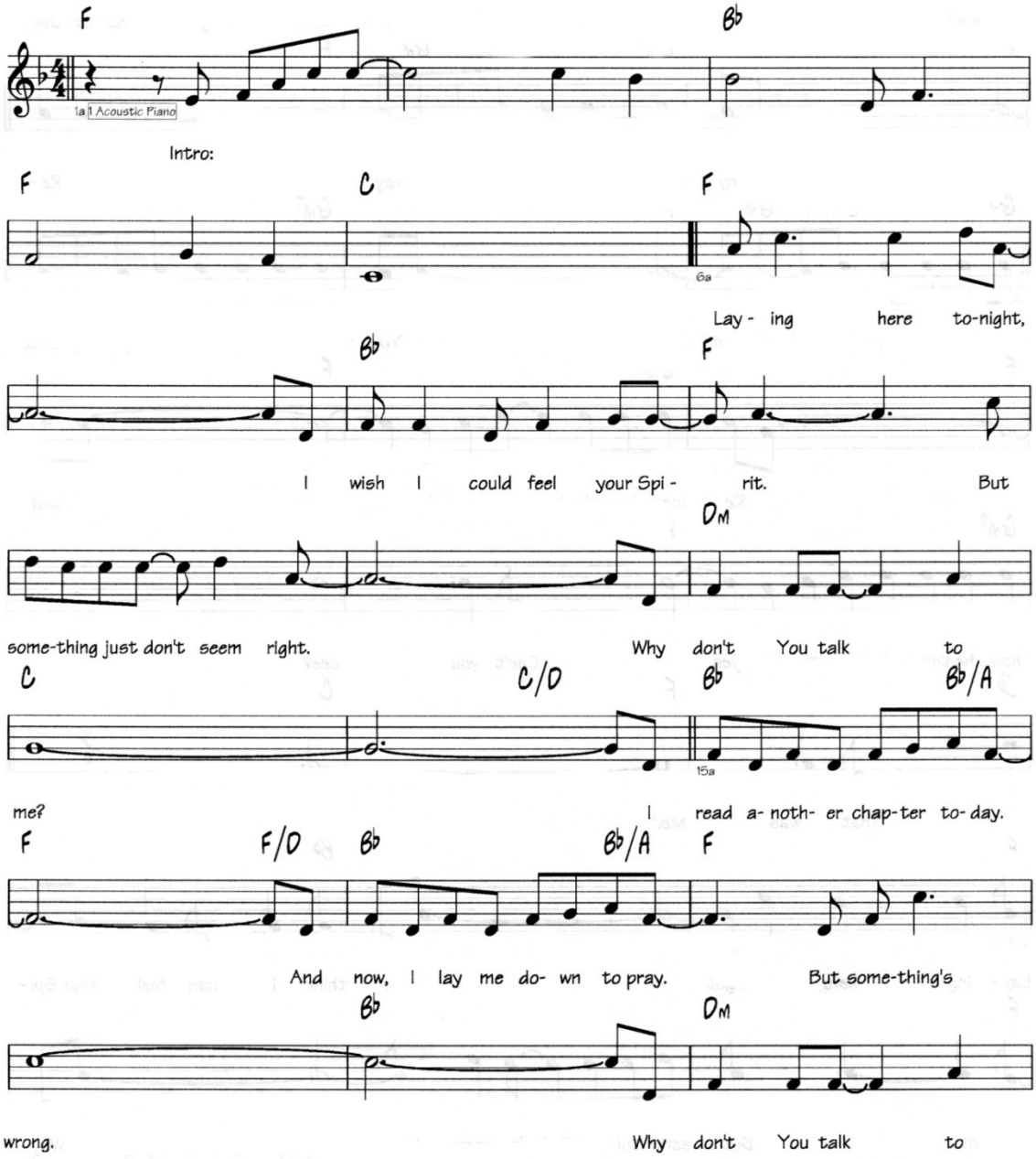


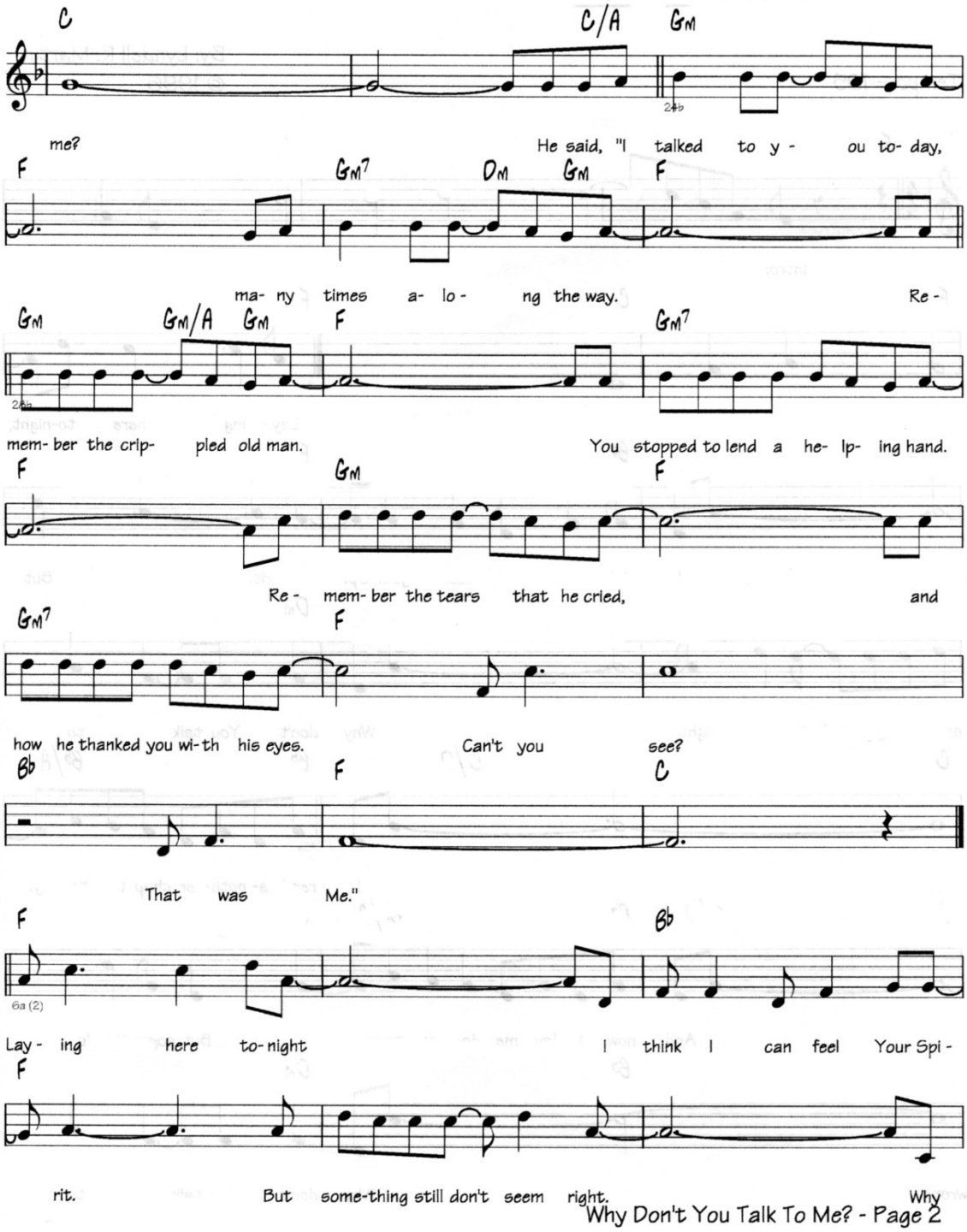
WHAT A WONDERFUL LIFE OVER THERE - Page 4

Why Don't You Talk To Me?

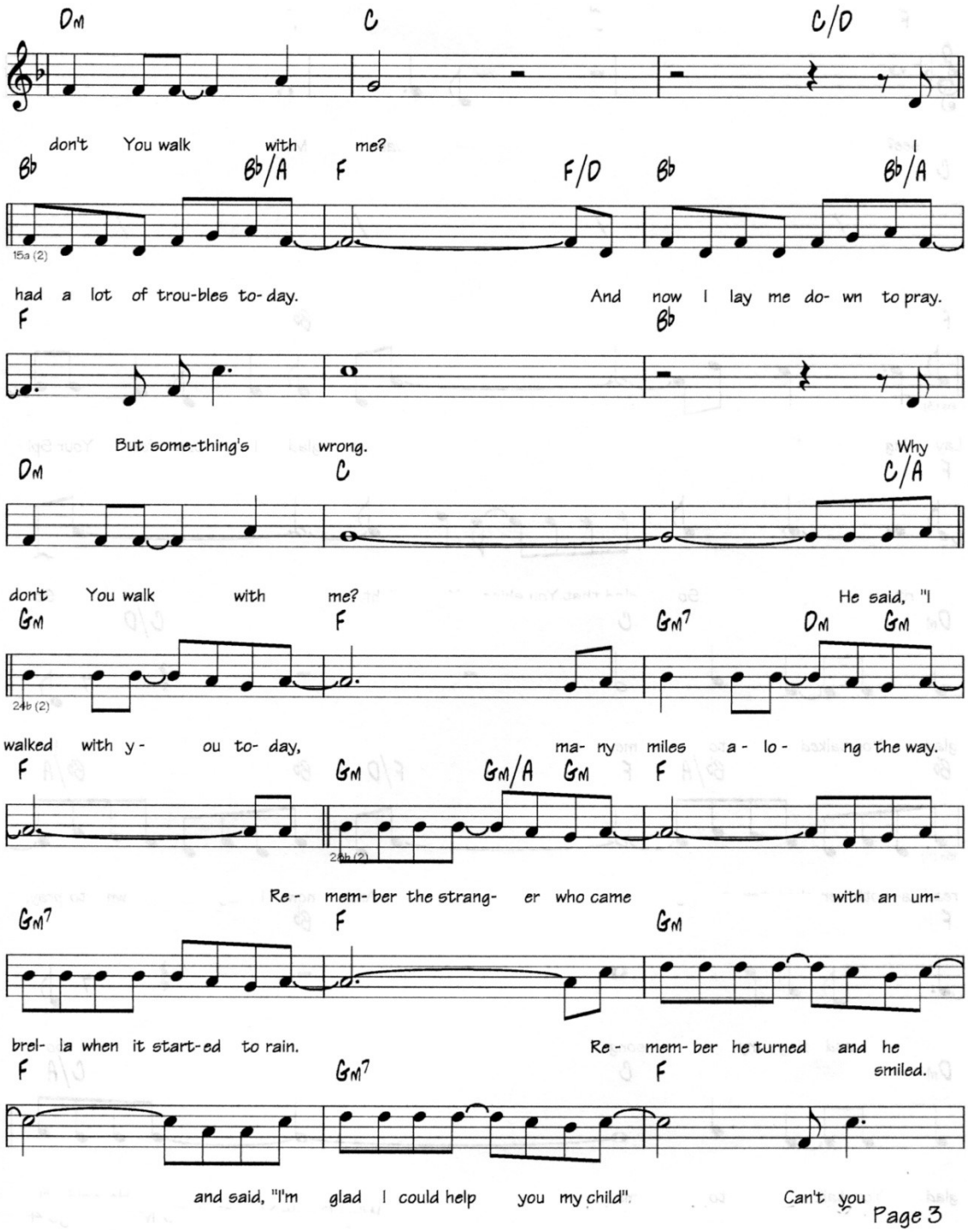
By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1996

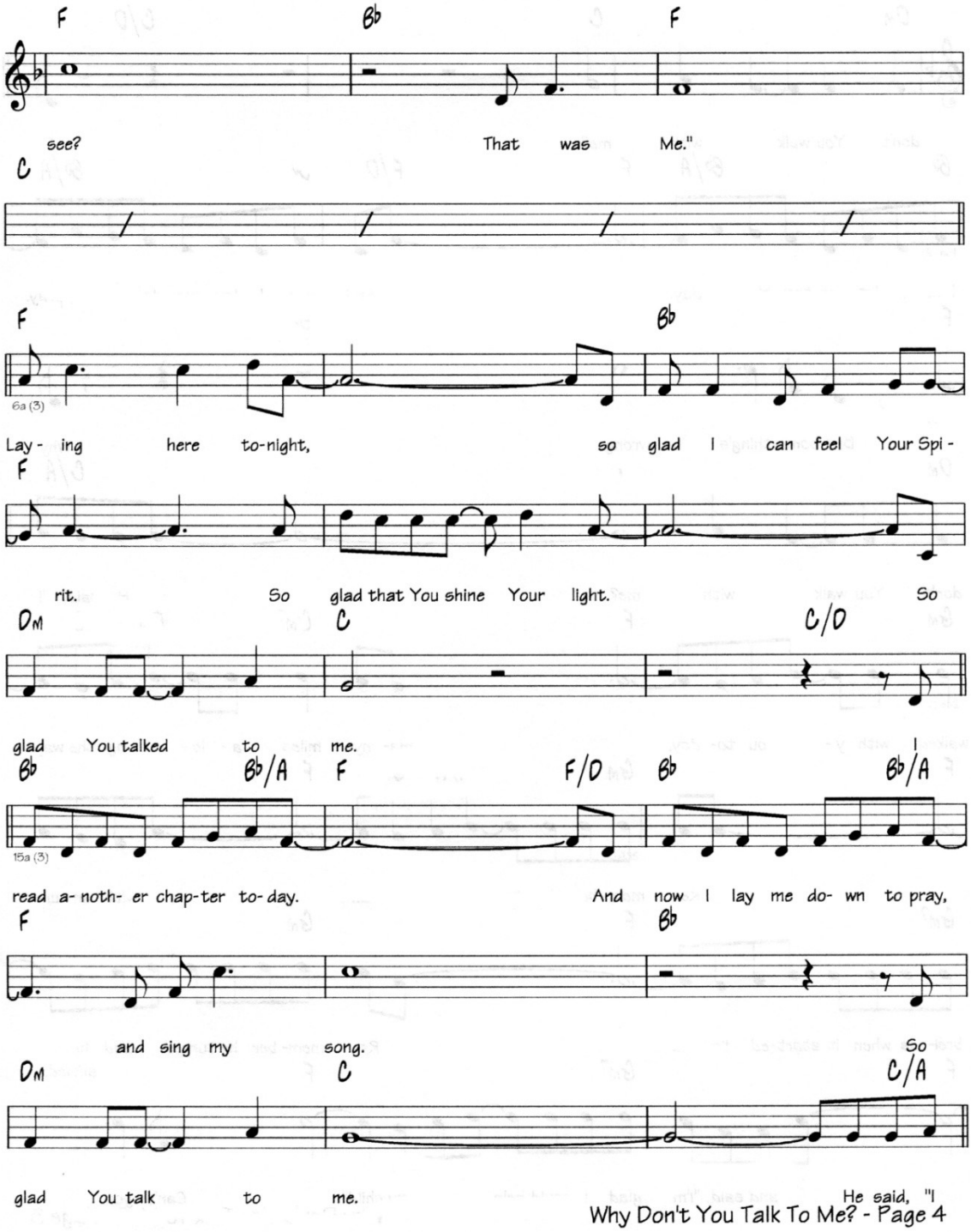
Tempo = 105

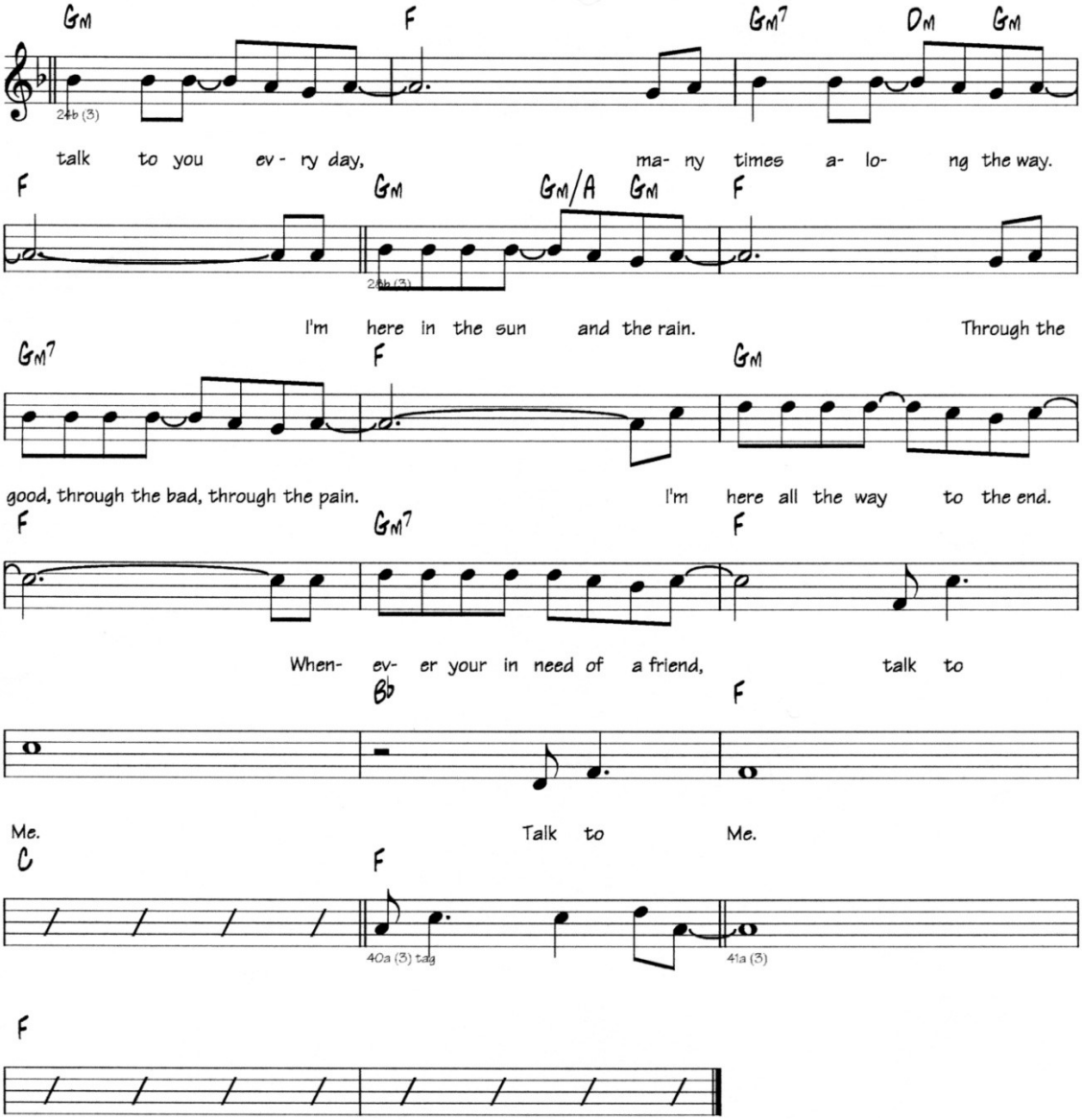




Why Don't You Talk To Me? - Page 2


Dm C C/D
don't You walk with me?
Bb Bb/A F F/D Bb Bb/A
15a (2)
had a lot of trou-bles to-day. And now I lay me do- wn to pray.
F Bb
But some-thing's wrong. Why
Dm C C/A
don't You walk with me? He said, "I
Gm F Gm7 Dm Gm
24b (2)
walked with y- ou to- day, ma- ny miles a- lo- ng the way.
F Gm Gm/A Gm F
24b (2)
Re- mem- ber the strang- er who came with an um-
Gm7 F Gm
brel- la when it start-ed to rain. Re- mem- ber he turned and he
F Gm7 F smiled.
and said, "I'm glad I could help you my child". Can't you
Page 3


F Bb F
see? That was Me."
C
F Bb
6a (3)
Lay- ing here to-night, so glad I can feel Your Spi-
F
rit. So glad that You shine Your light. So
Dm C C/D
glad You talked to me. I
Bb Bb/A F F/D Bb Bb/A
15a (3)
read a- noth- er chap-ter to- day. And now I lay me do- wn to pray,
F Bb
and sing my song. So
Dm C C/A
glad You talk to me. He said, "I

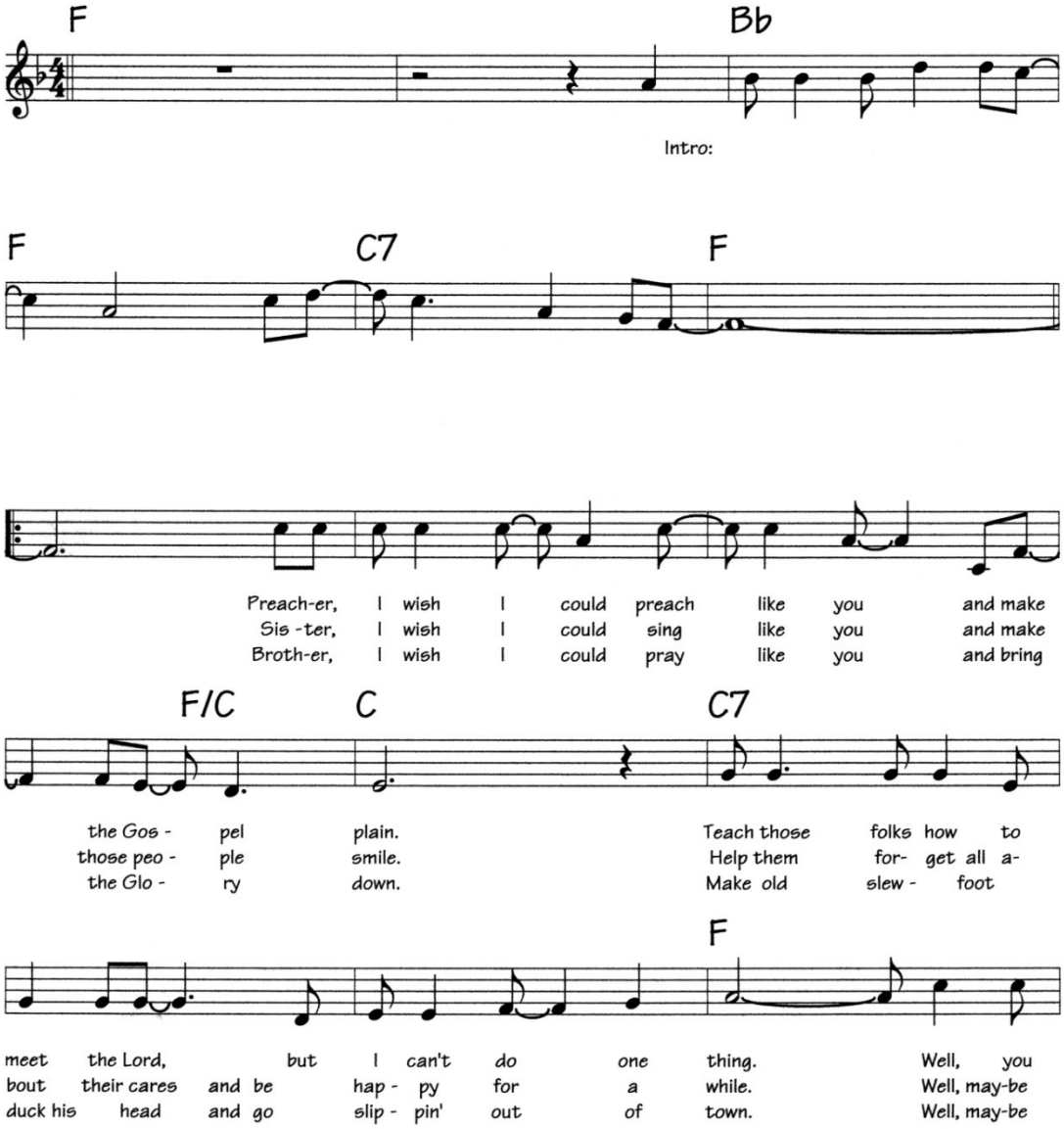


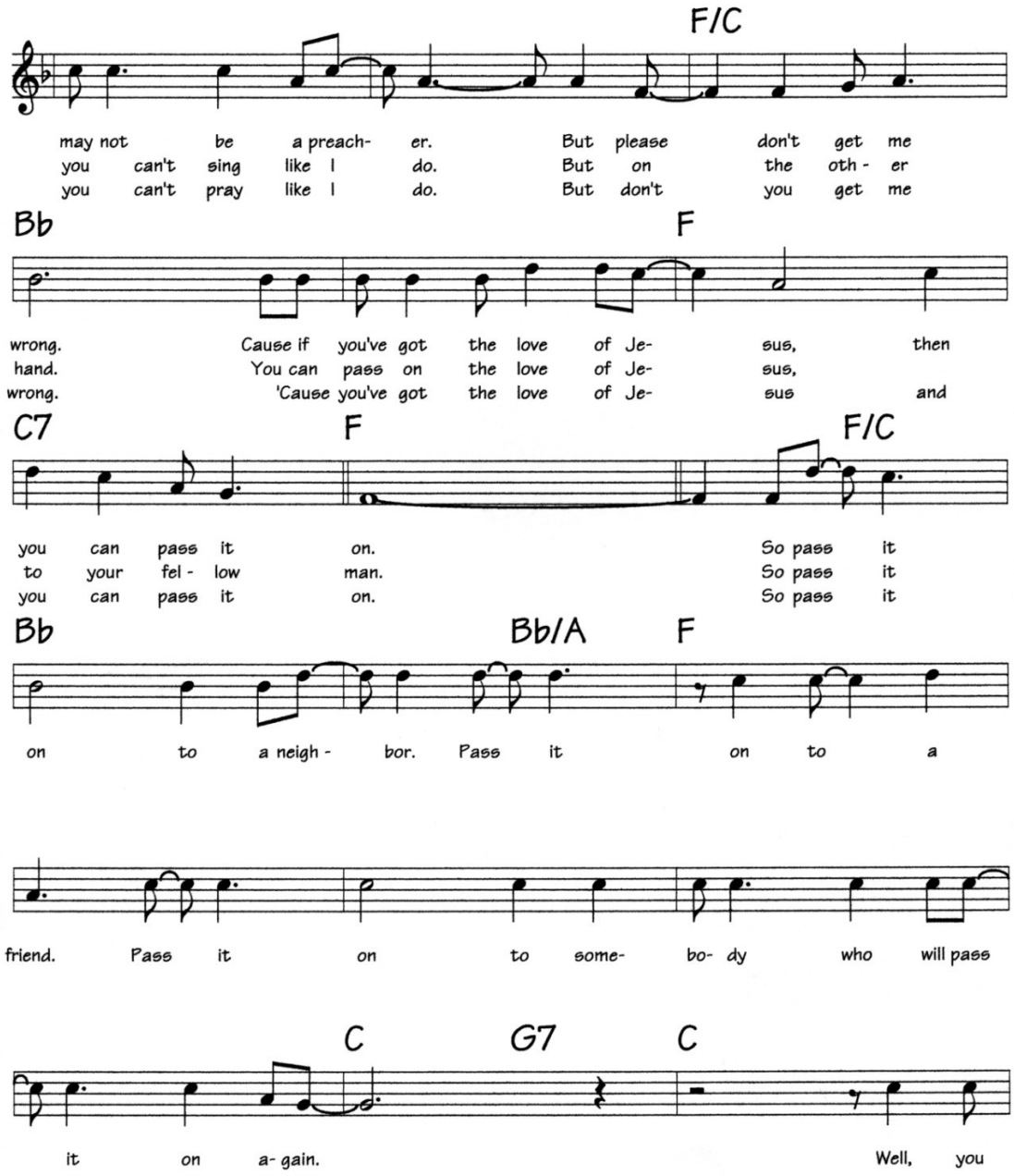
Why Don't You Talk To Me? - Page 5

Pass It On

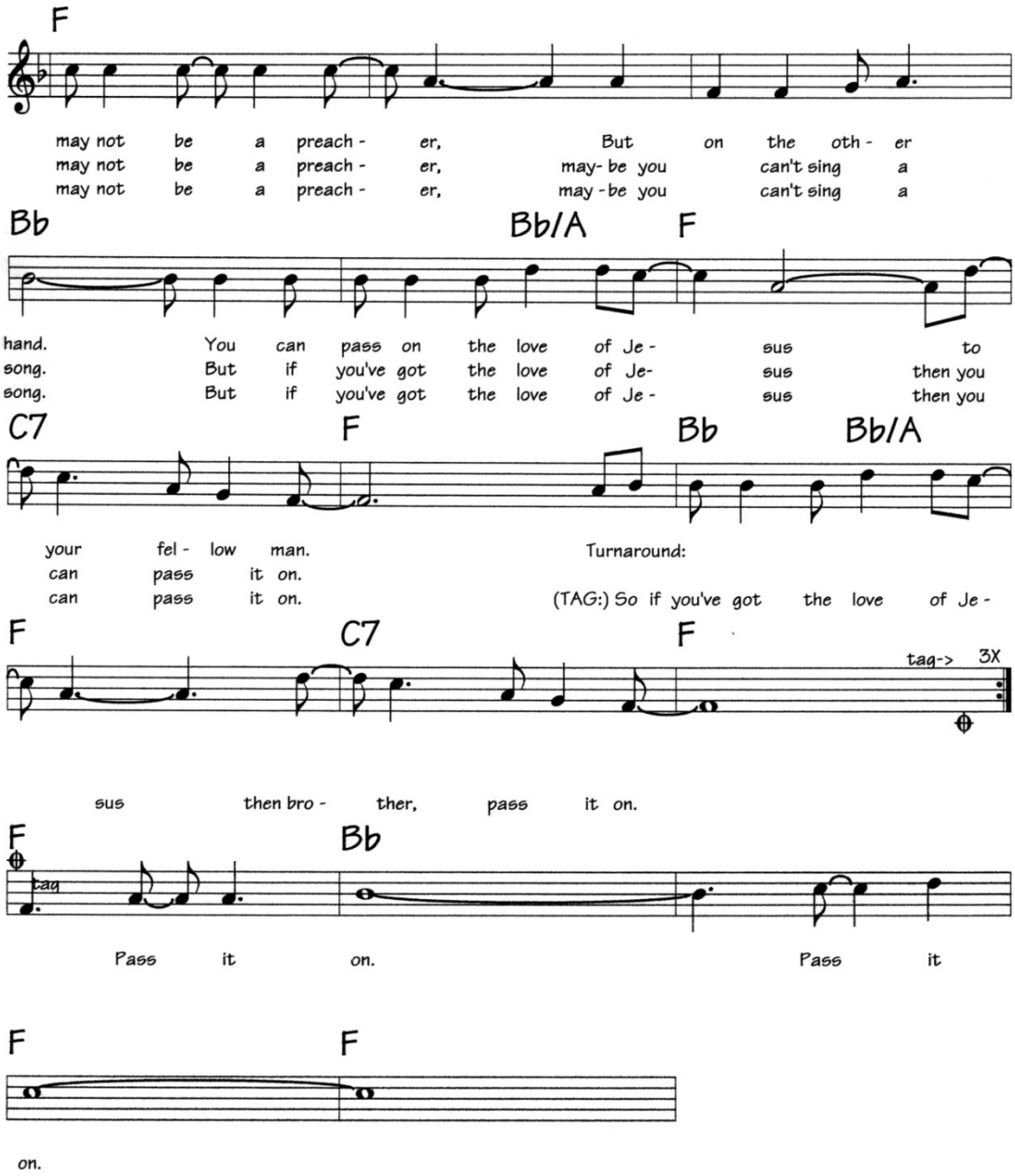
Requires 2 singers - Male & Female
Tempo = 160

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1987





Pass It On - Page 2

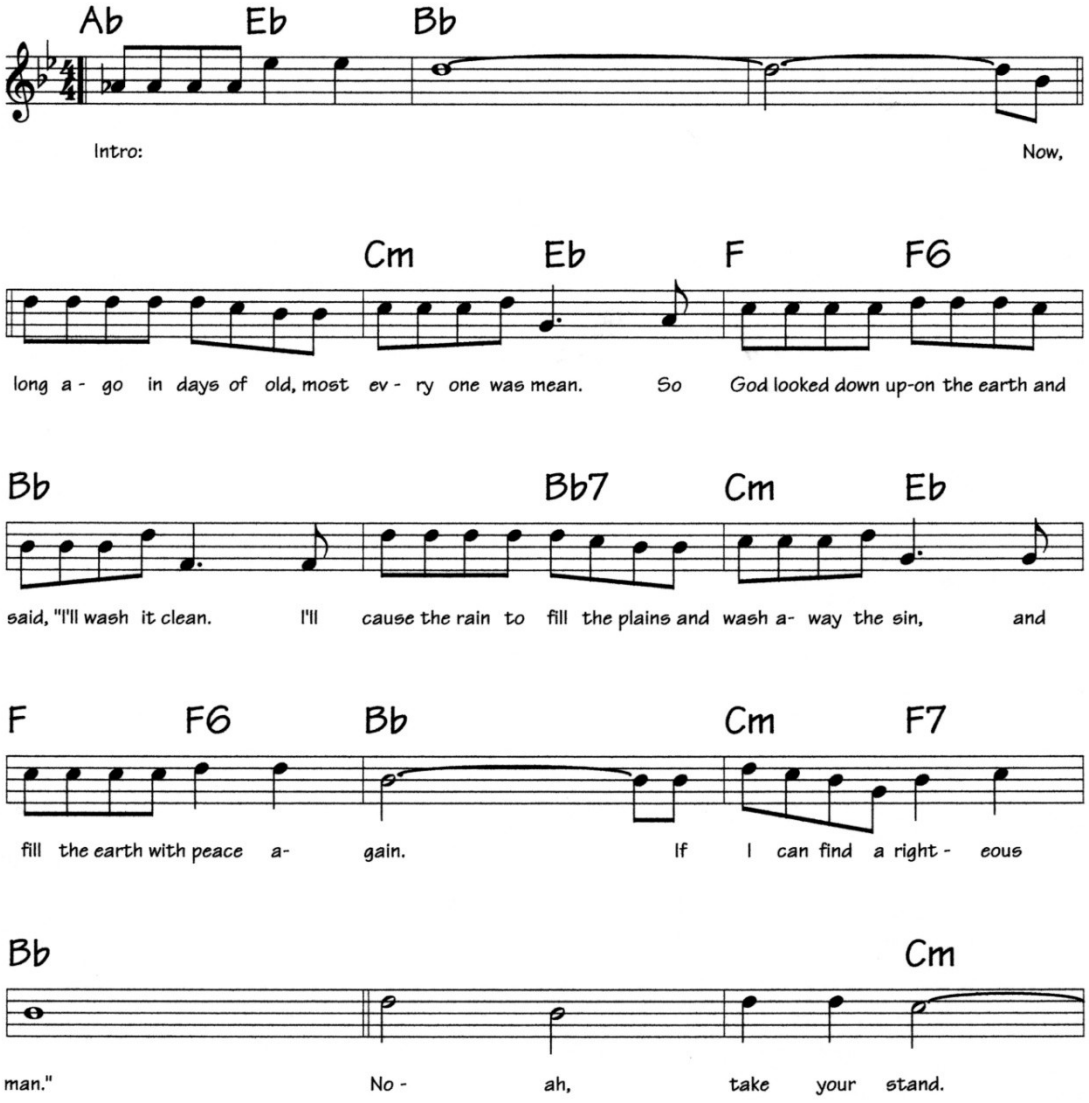


Pass It On - Page 3

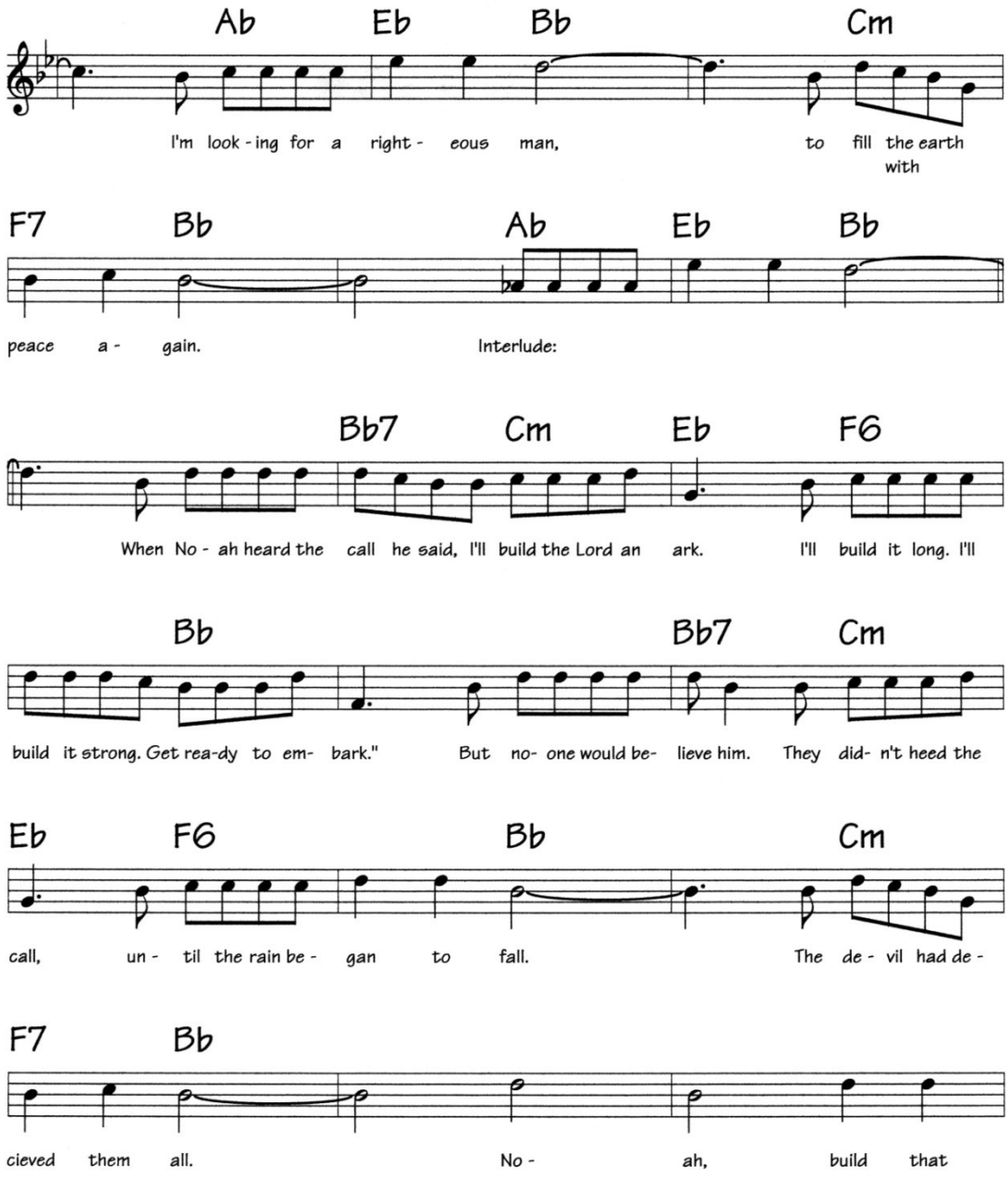
Noah's Ark

BY: Lyndell R. Martn

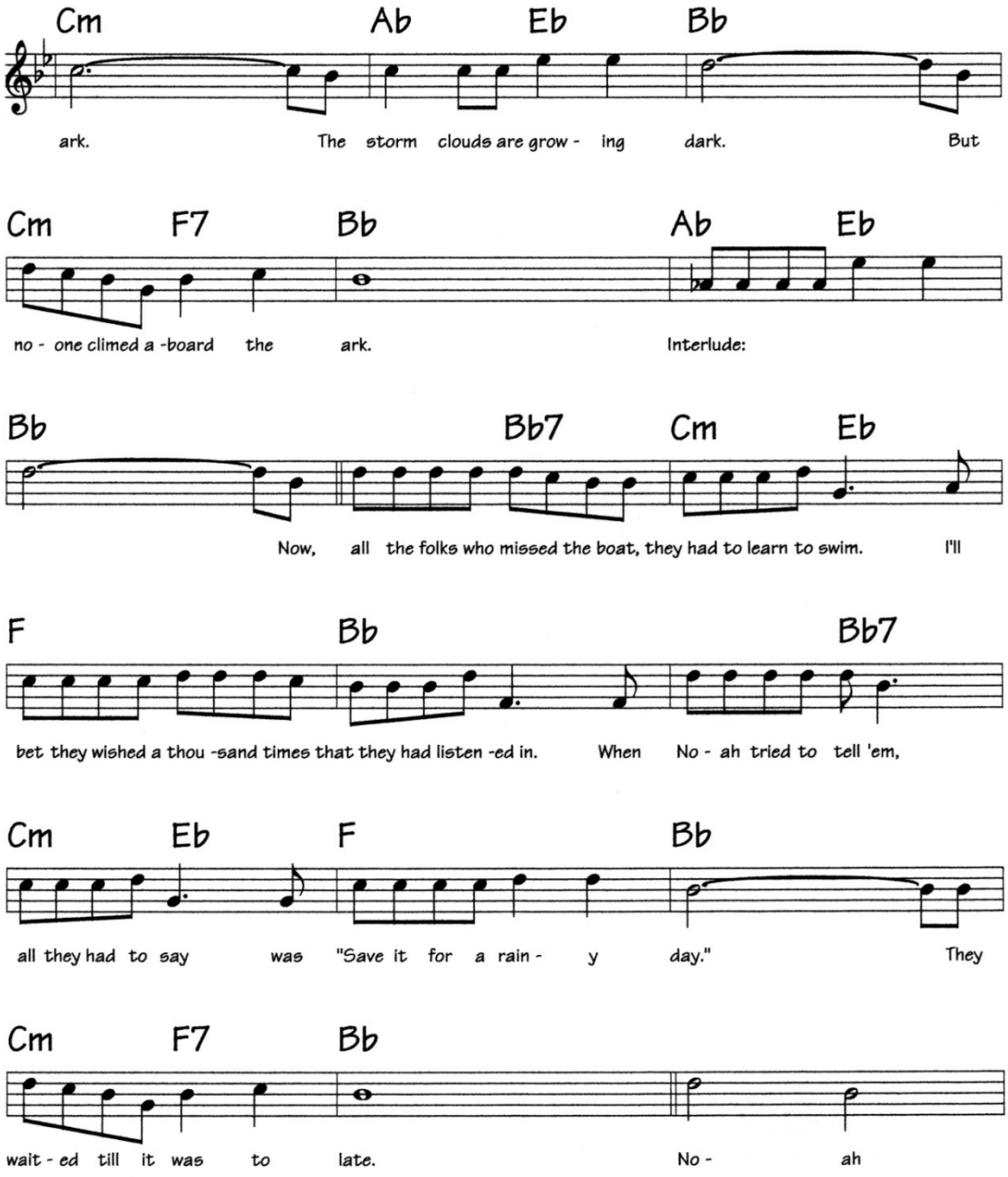
Tempo = 110



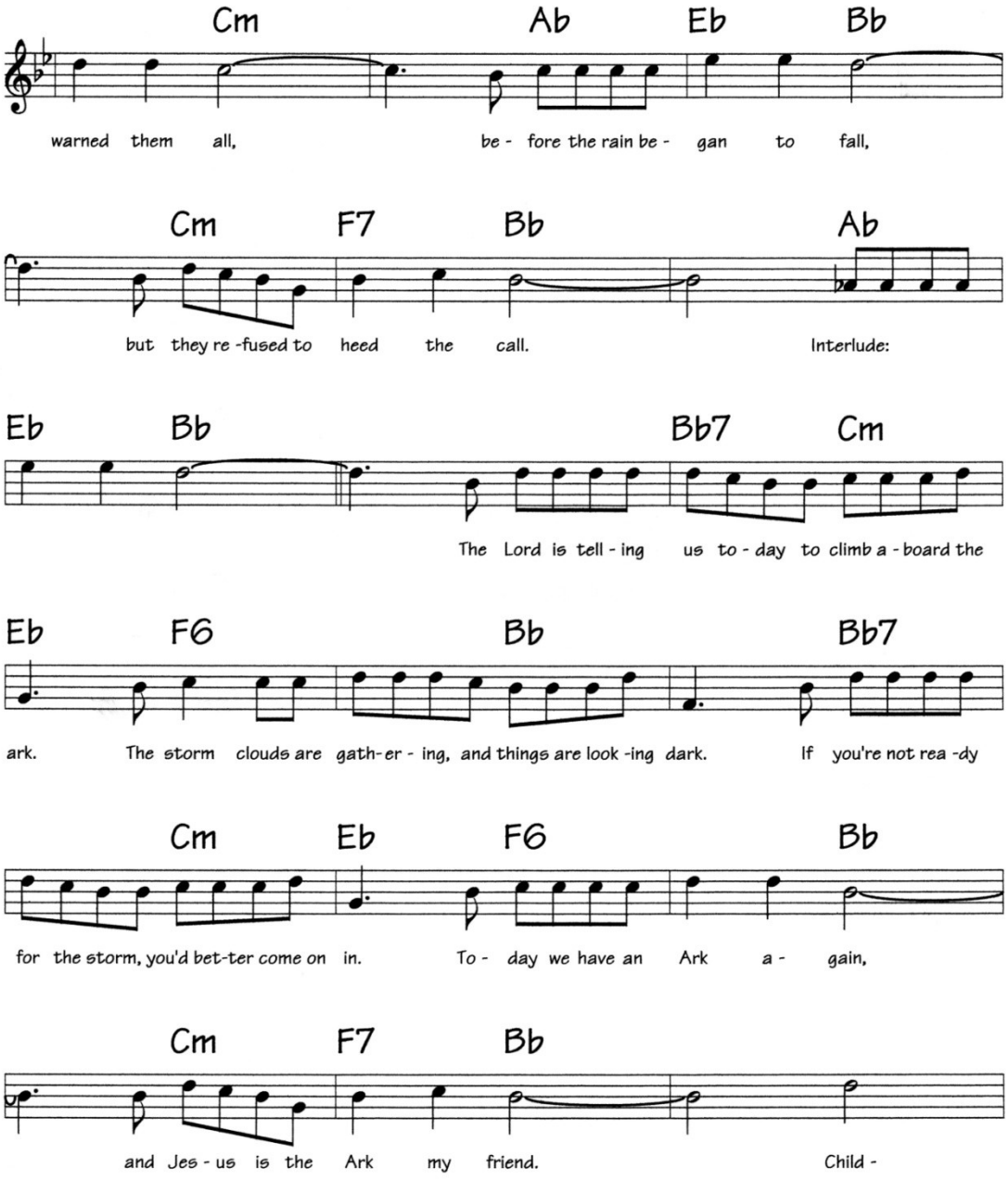
© 1981



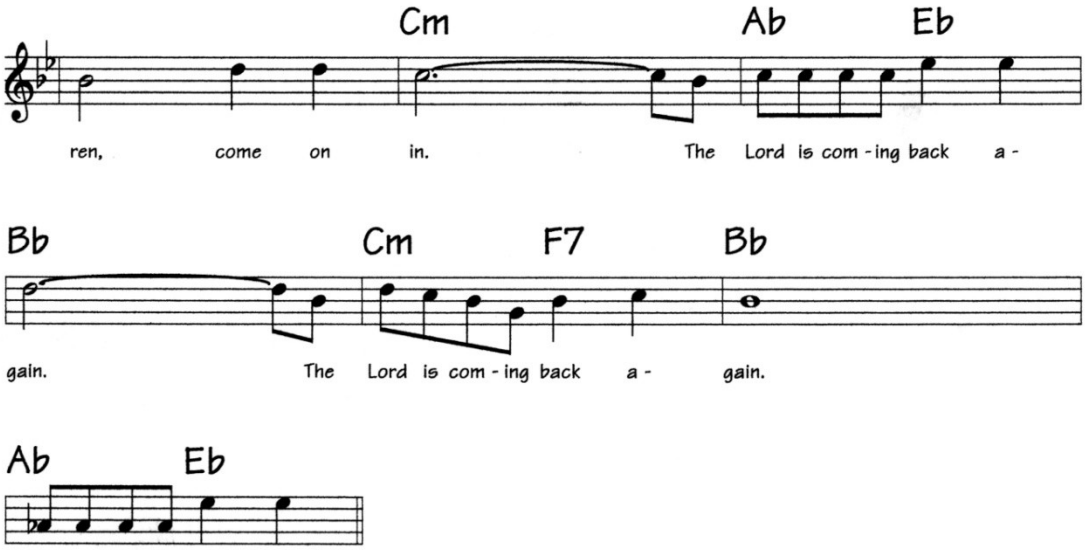
Noah's Ark - Page 2



Noah's Ark - Page 3



Noah's Ark - Page 4

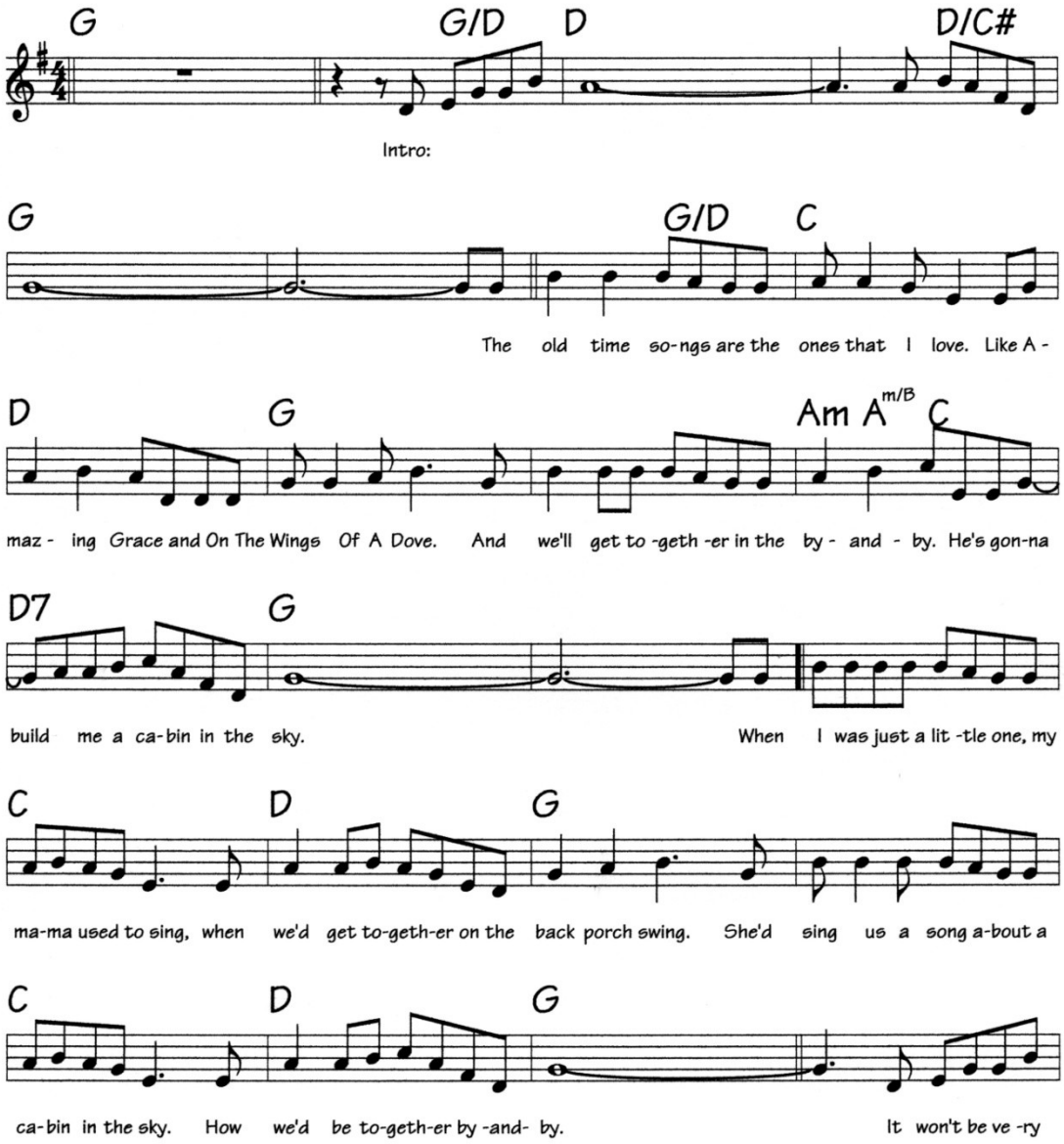

Cm
Ab
Eb
ren, come on in. The Lord is com - ing back a -
Bb
Cm
F7
Bb
gain. The Lord is com - ing back a - gain.
Ab
Eb

Tag:

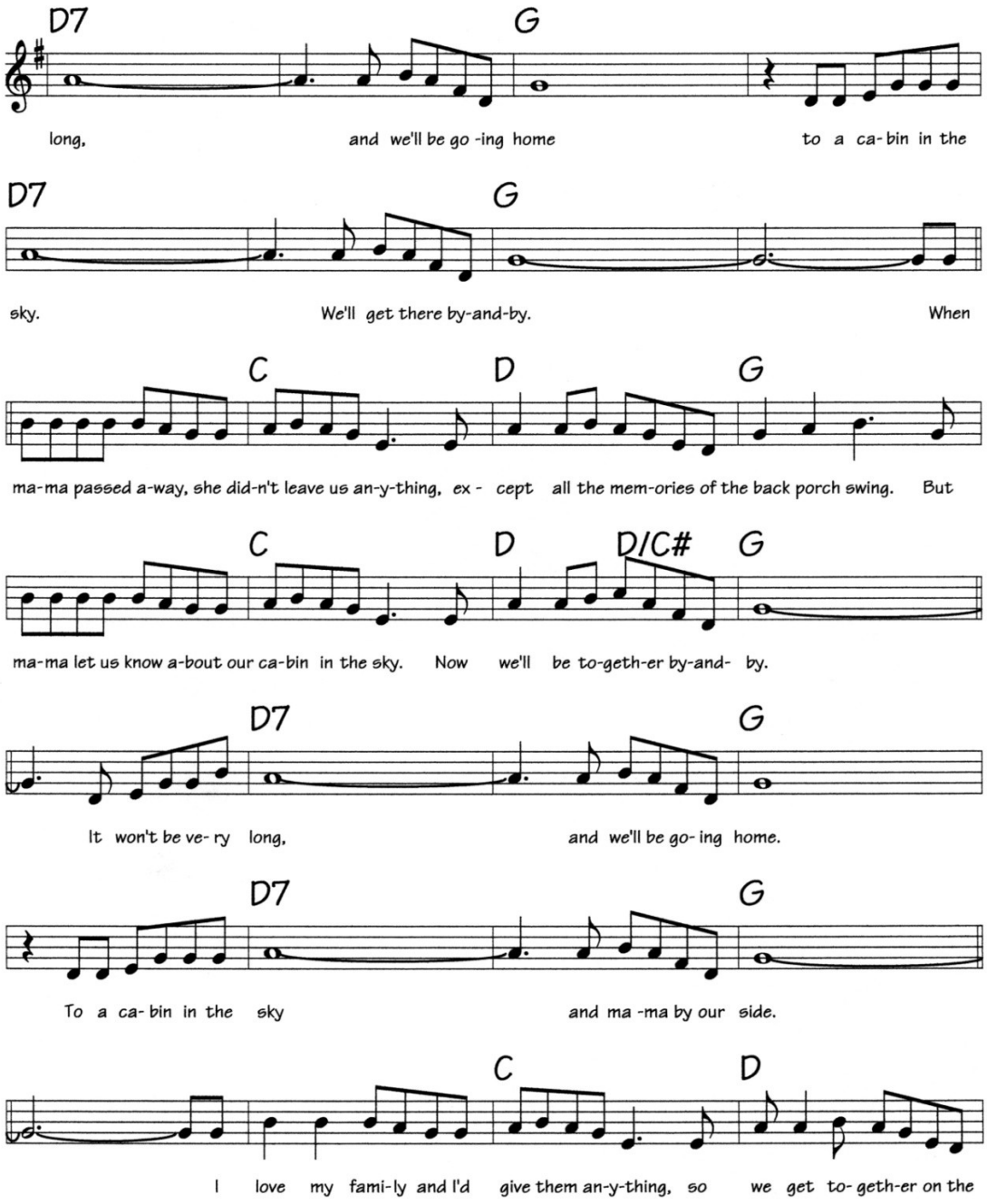
The Back Porch Swing

By: Lyndell R. Martin

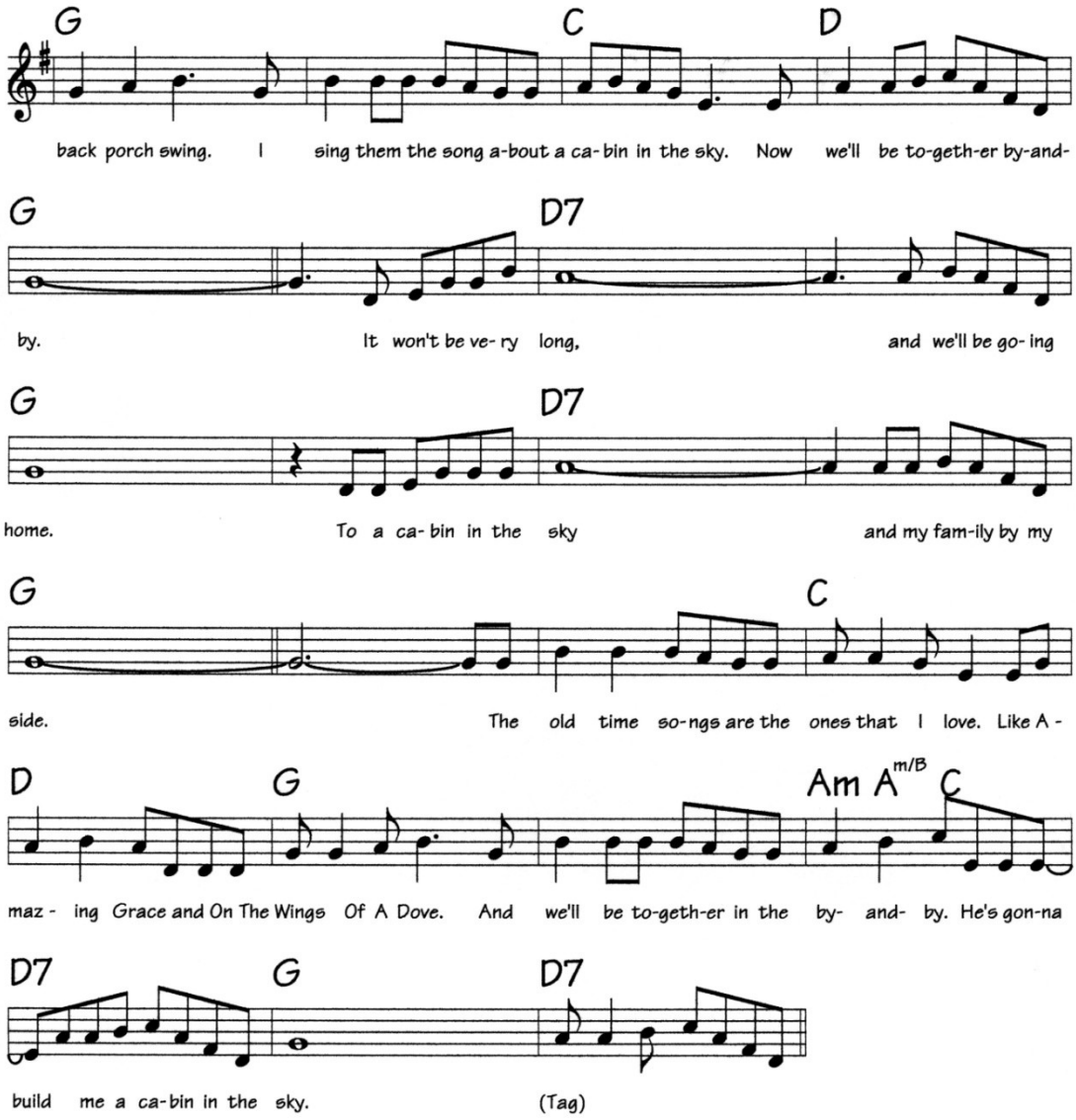
Tempo = 120



© 1988



The Back Porch Swing - Page 2

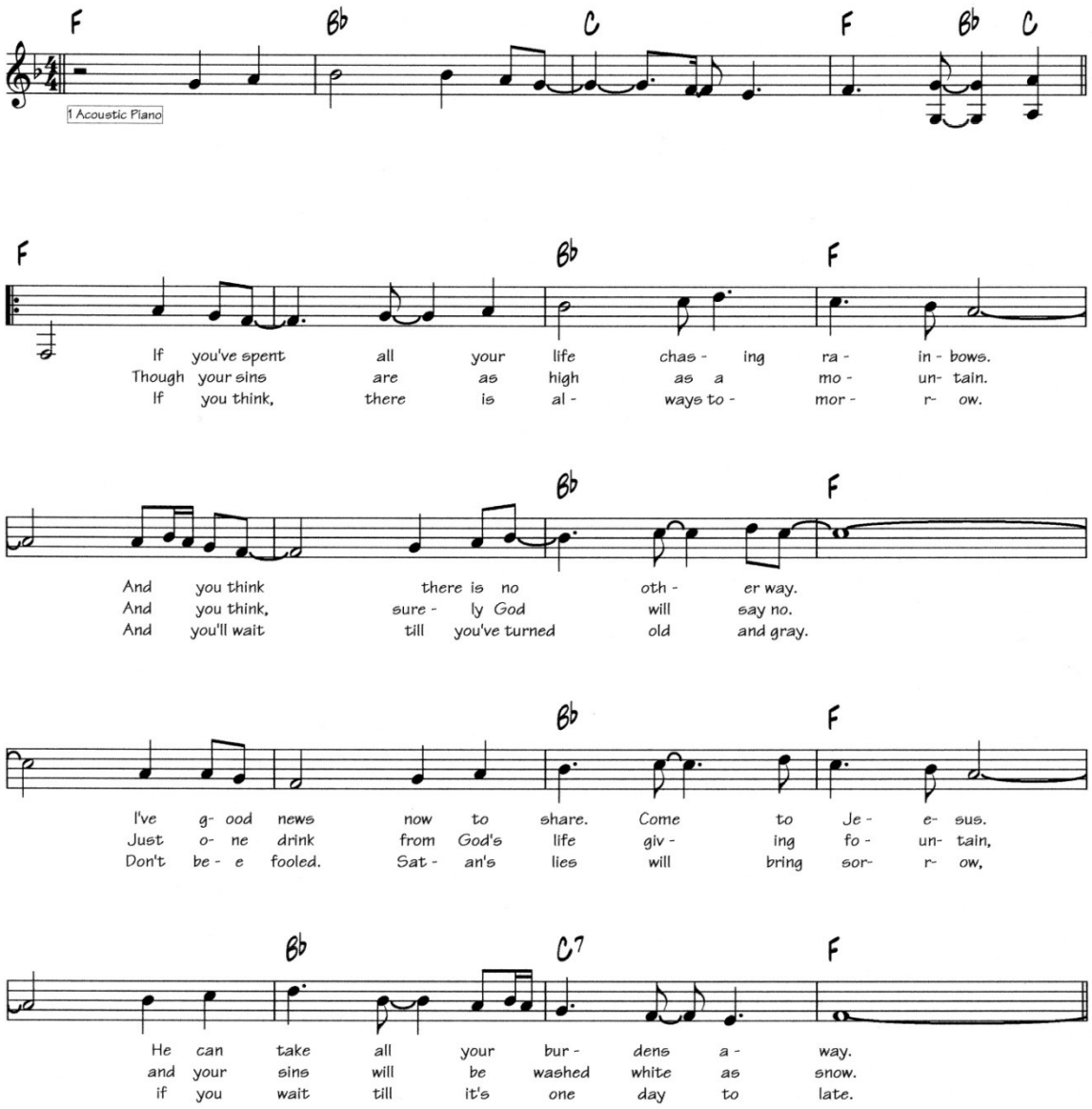


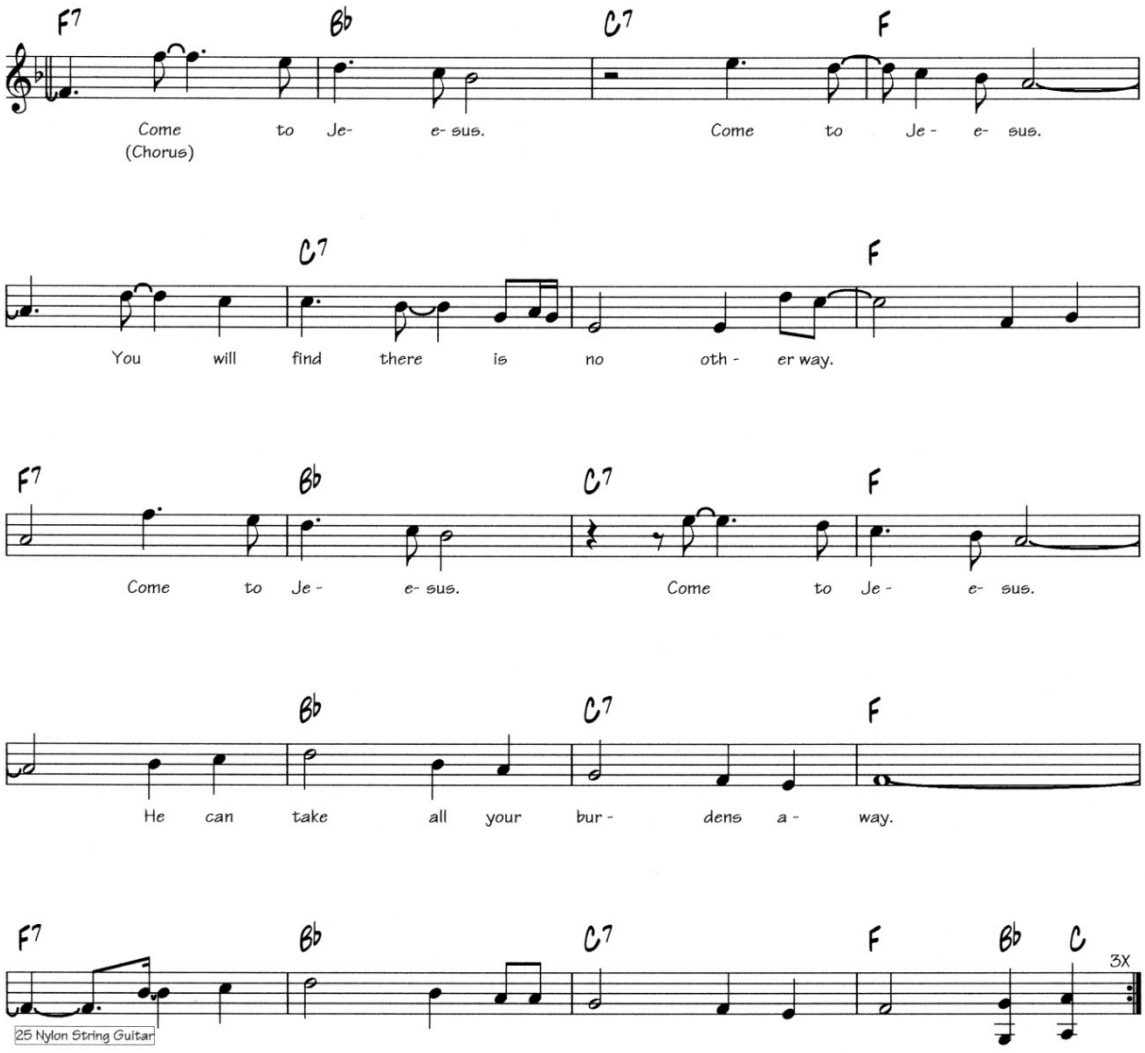
The Back Porch Swing - Page 3

Come To Jesus

By: Lyndell R. Martin
©1981 Words & Music

Tempo = 116



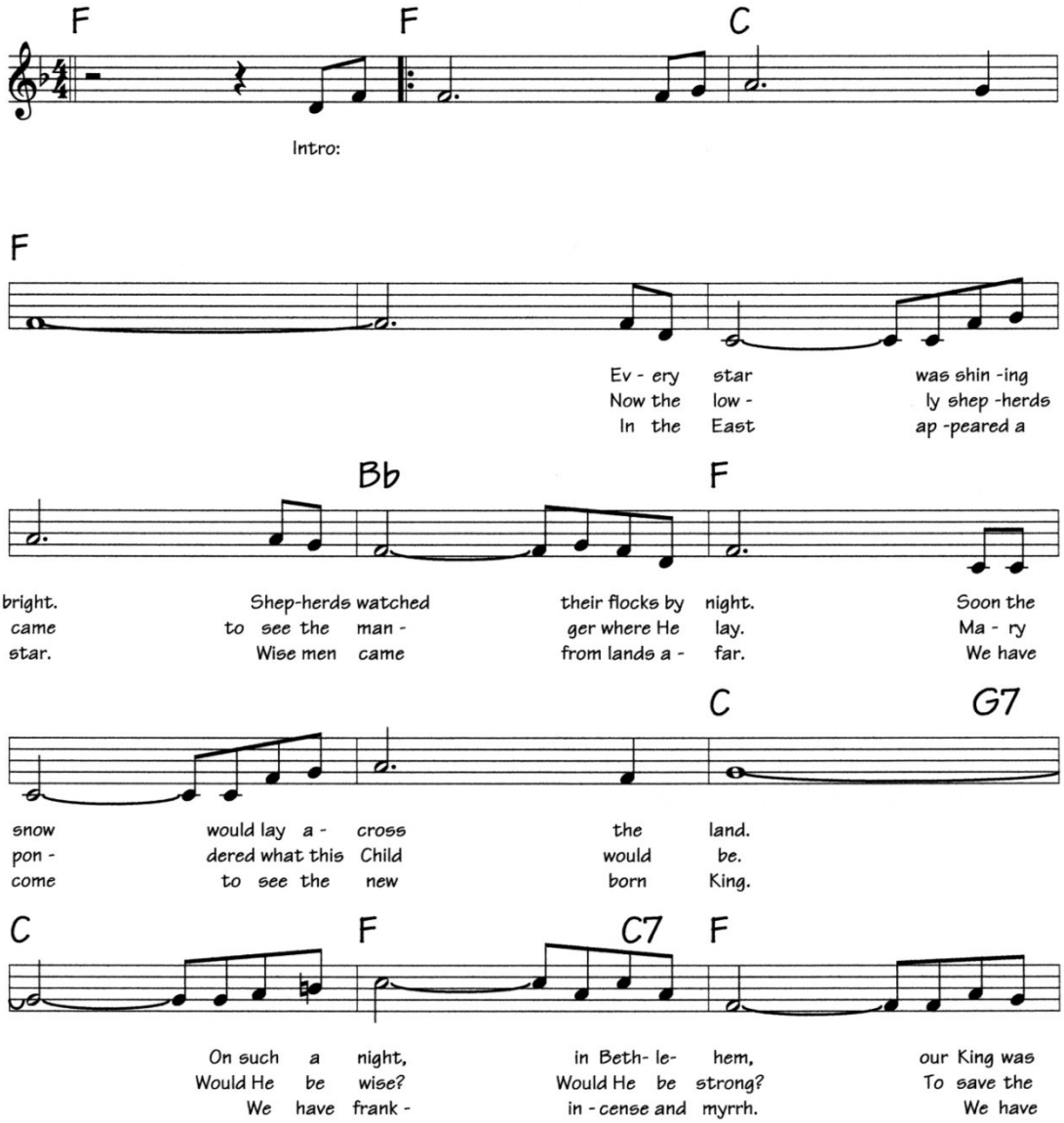


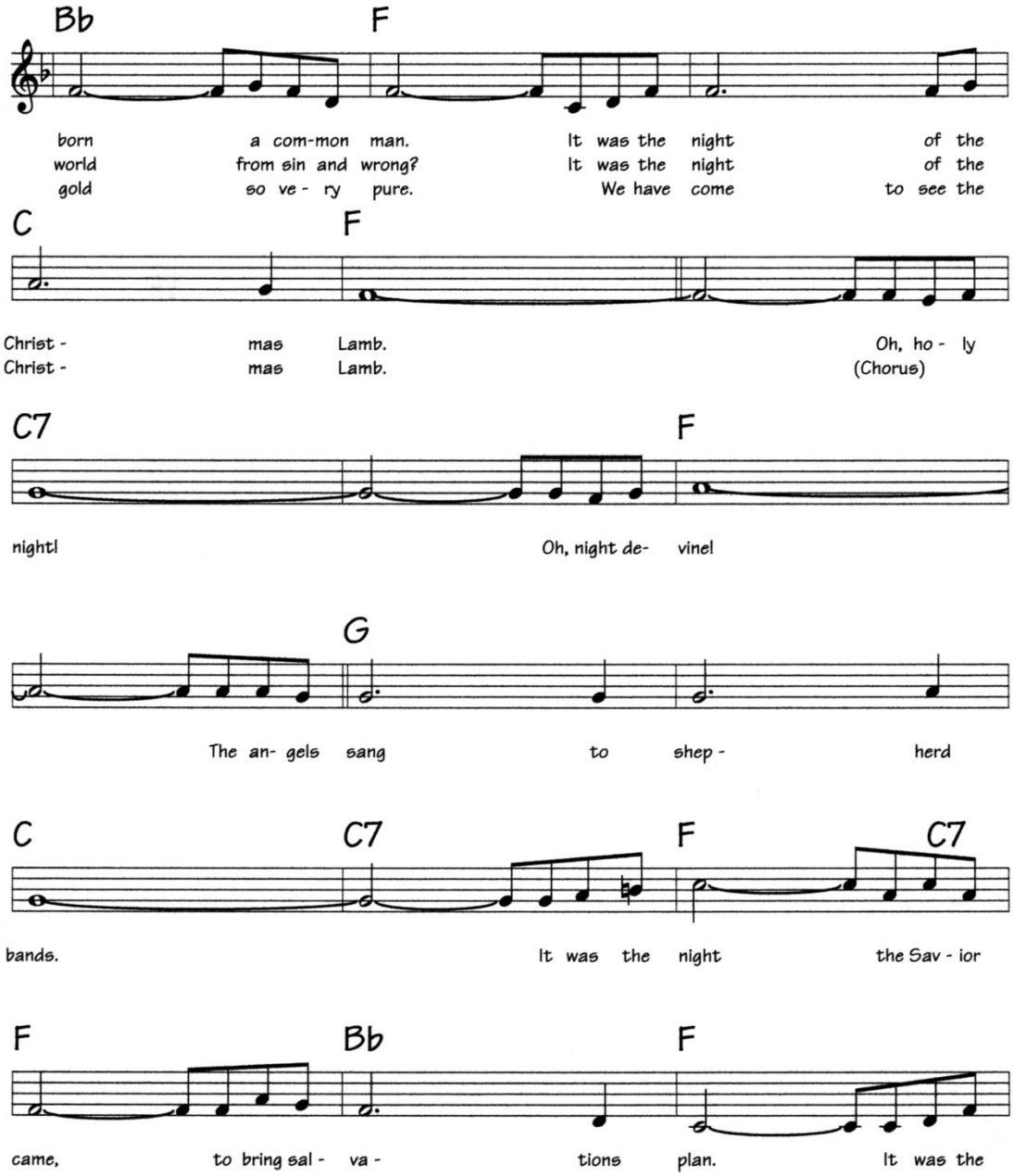
Come To Jesus - Page 2

The Christmas Lamb

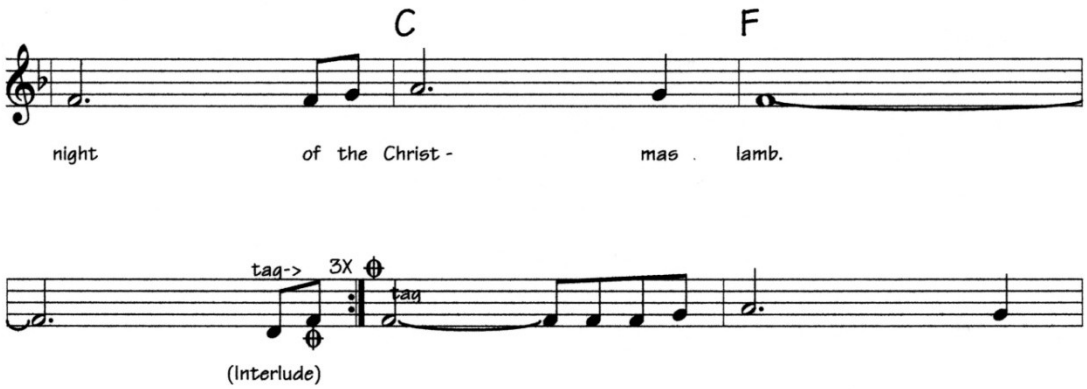
By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1988

Tempo = 100





The Christmas Lamb - Page 2

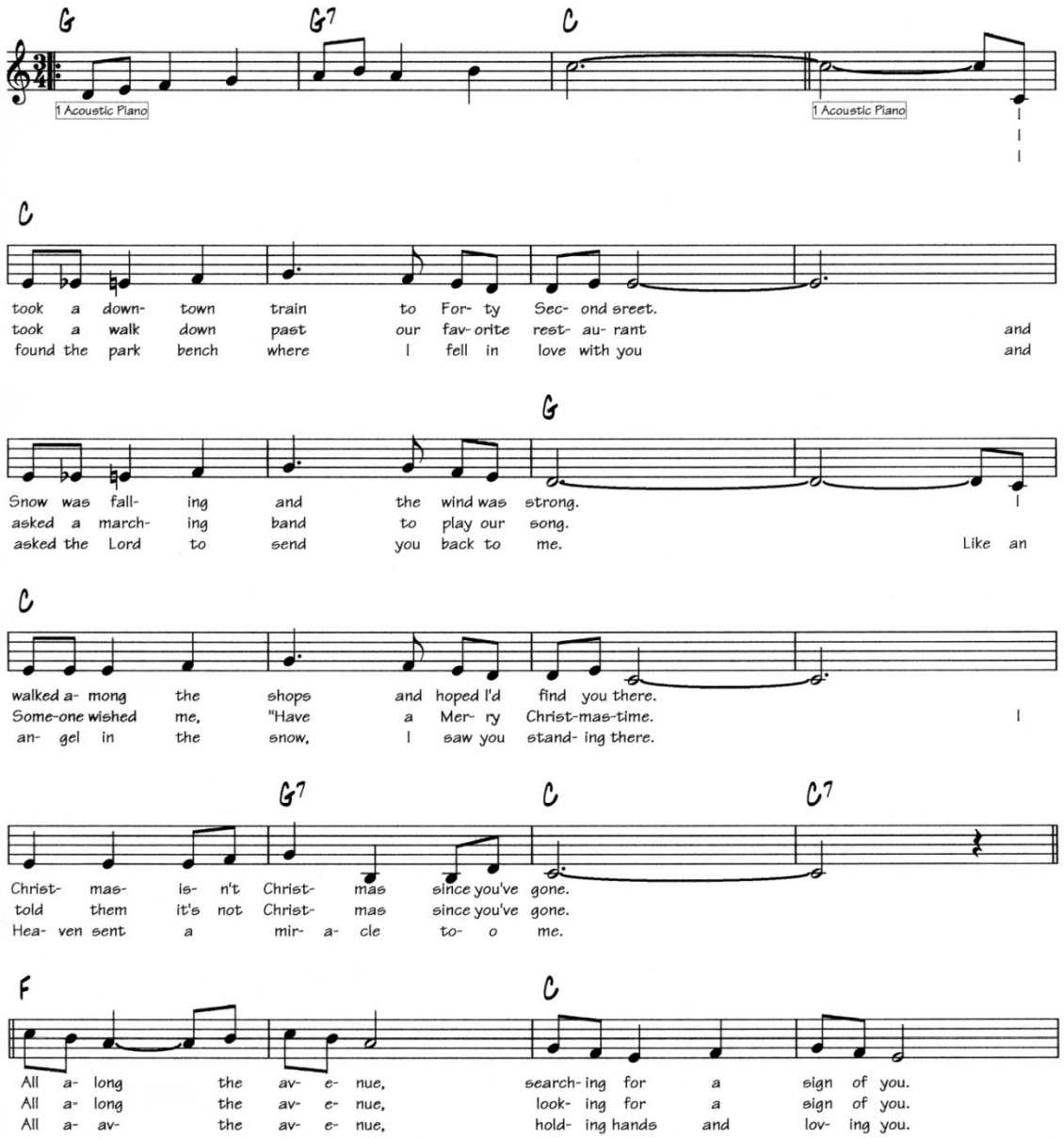


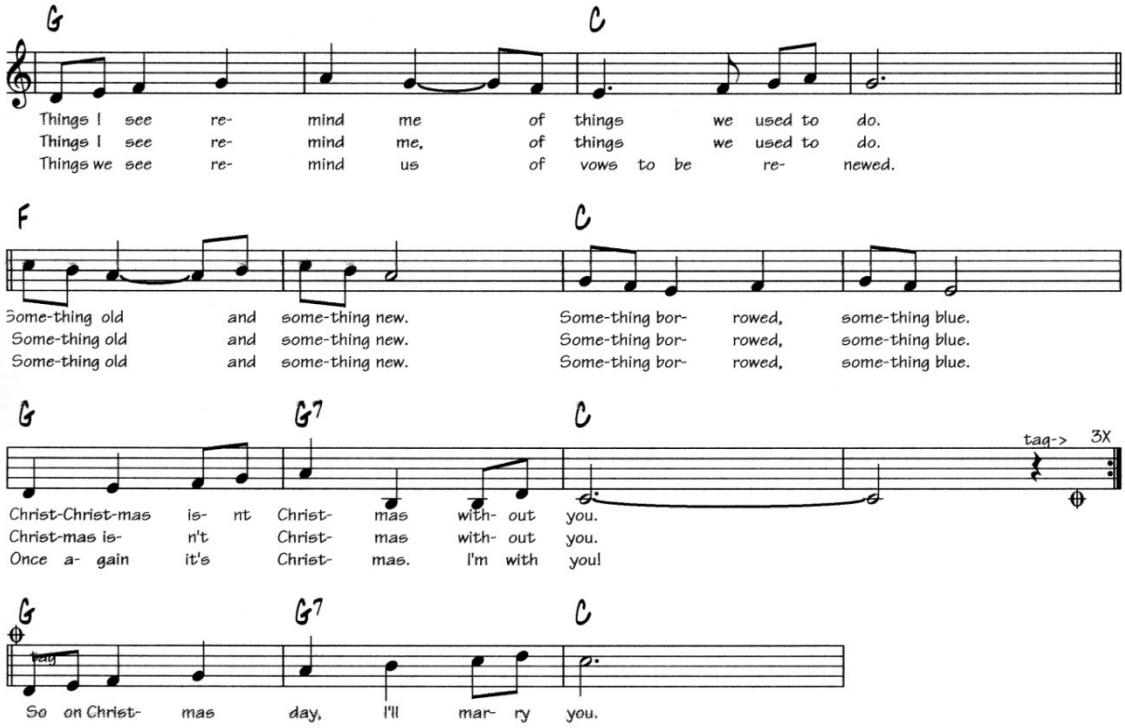
The Christmas Lamb - Page 3

CHRISTMAS ISN'T CHRISTMAS WITHOUT YOU

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1997 Words & Musoc

Tempo = 100



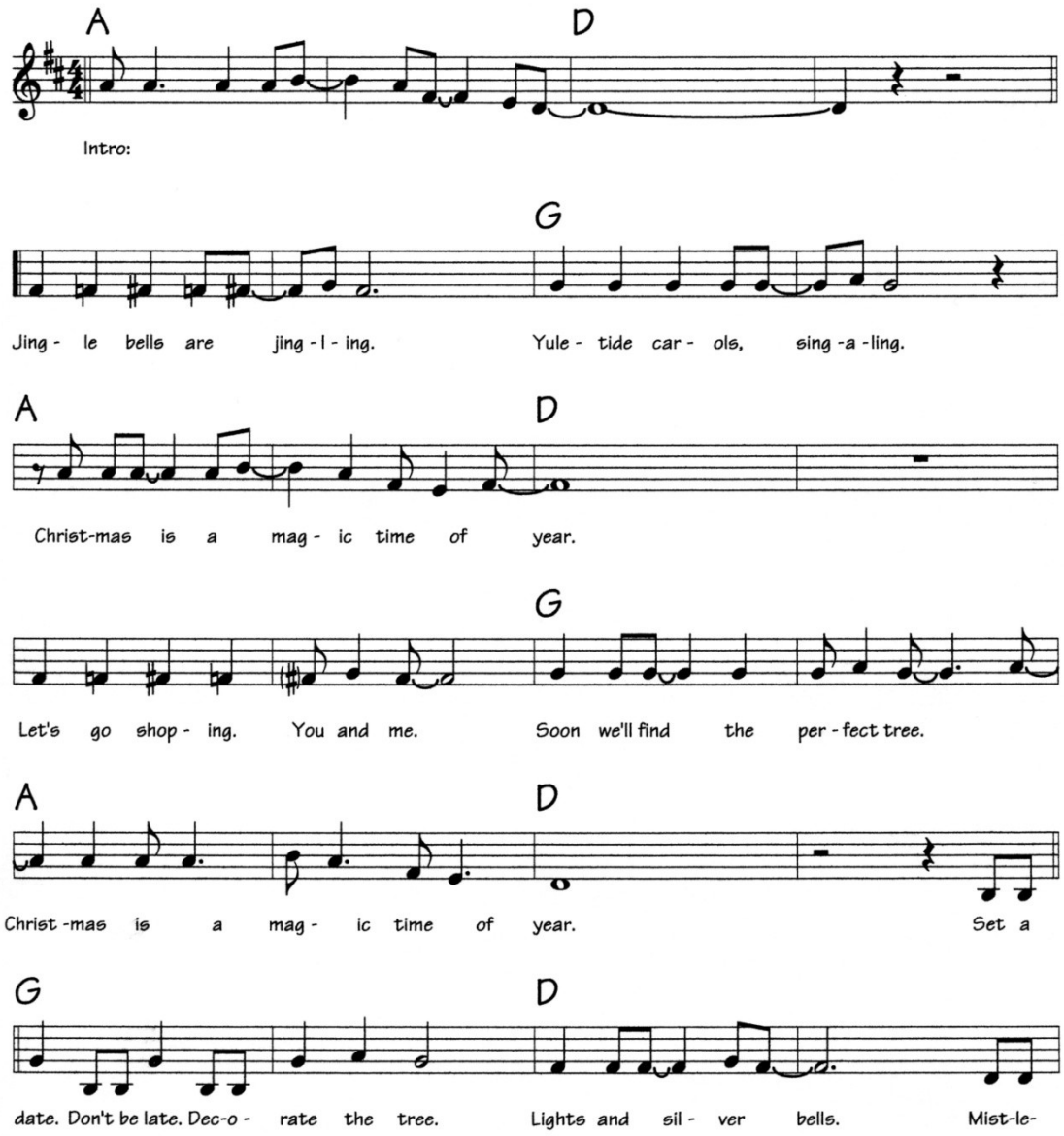


CHRISTMAS ISN'T CHRISTMAS WITHOUT YOU - Page 2

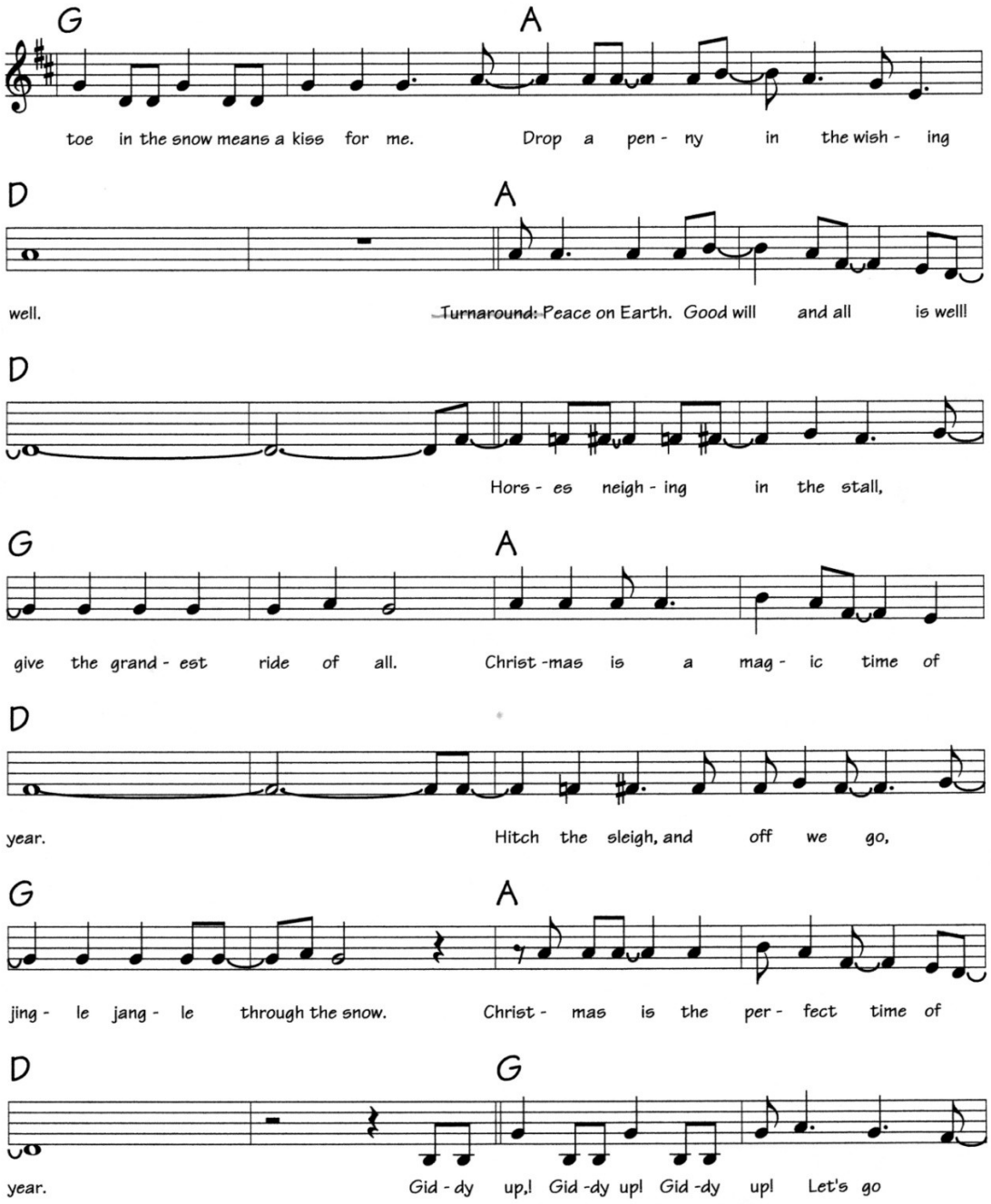
Christmas Is A Magic Time Of Year

By: Lyndell R. Martin

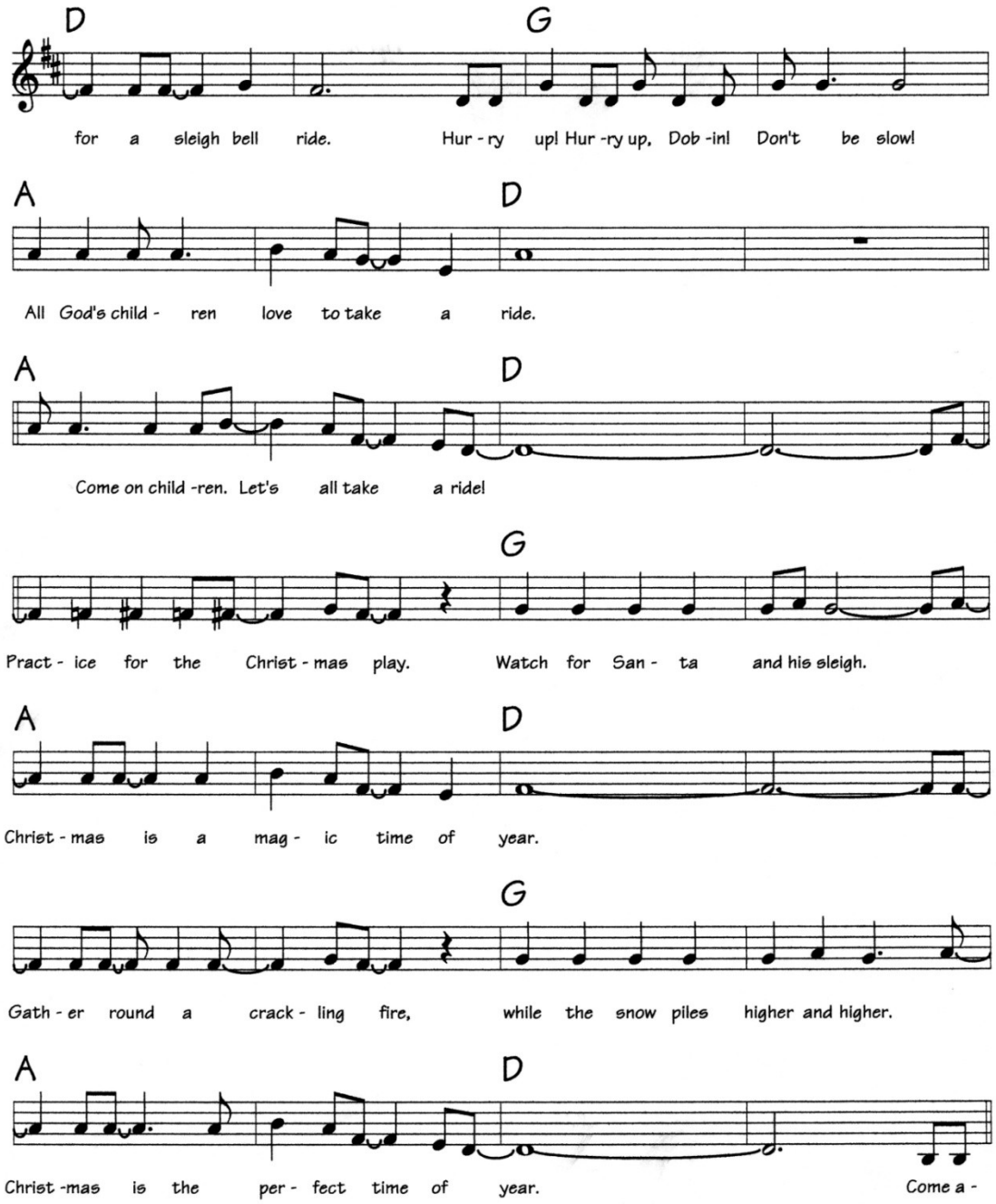
Tempo = 140



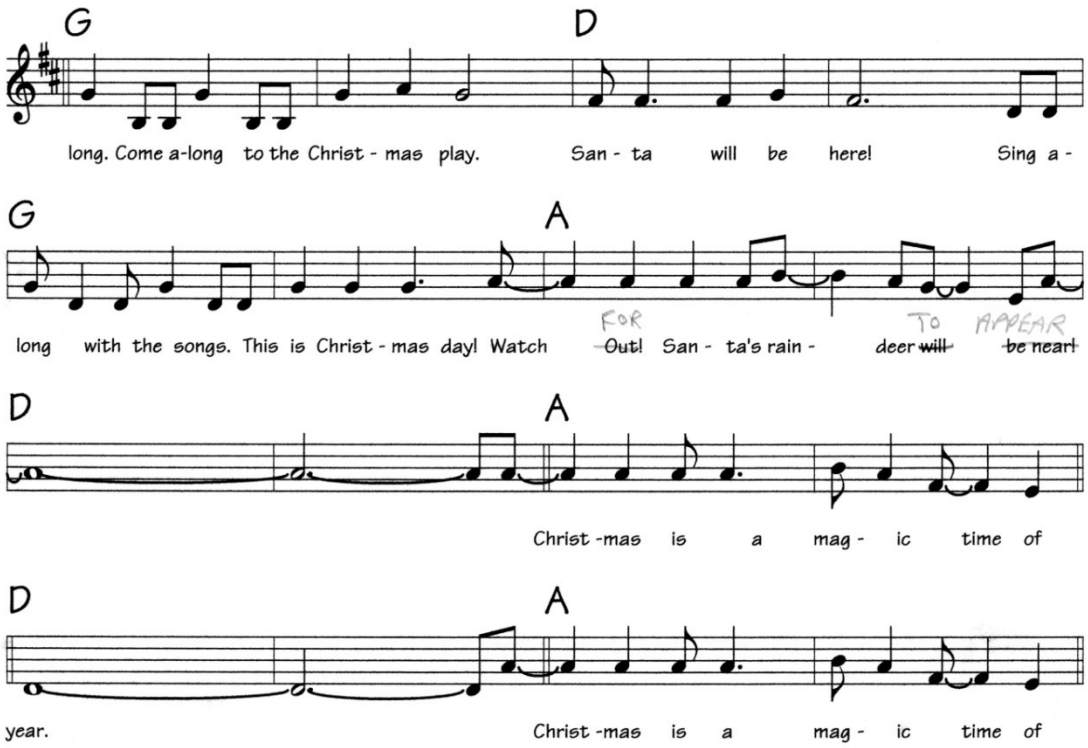
© 2003



Christmas Is A Magic Time Of Year - Page 2



Christmas Is A Magic Time Of Year - Page 3

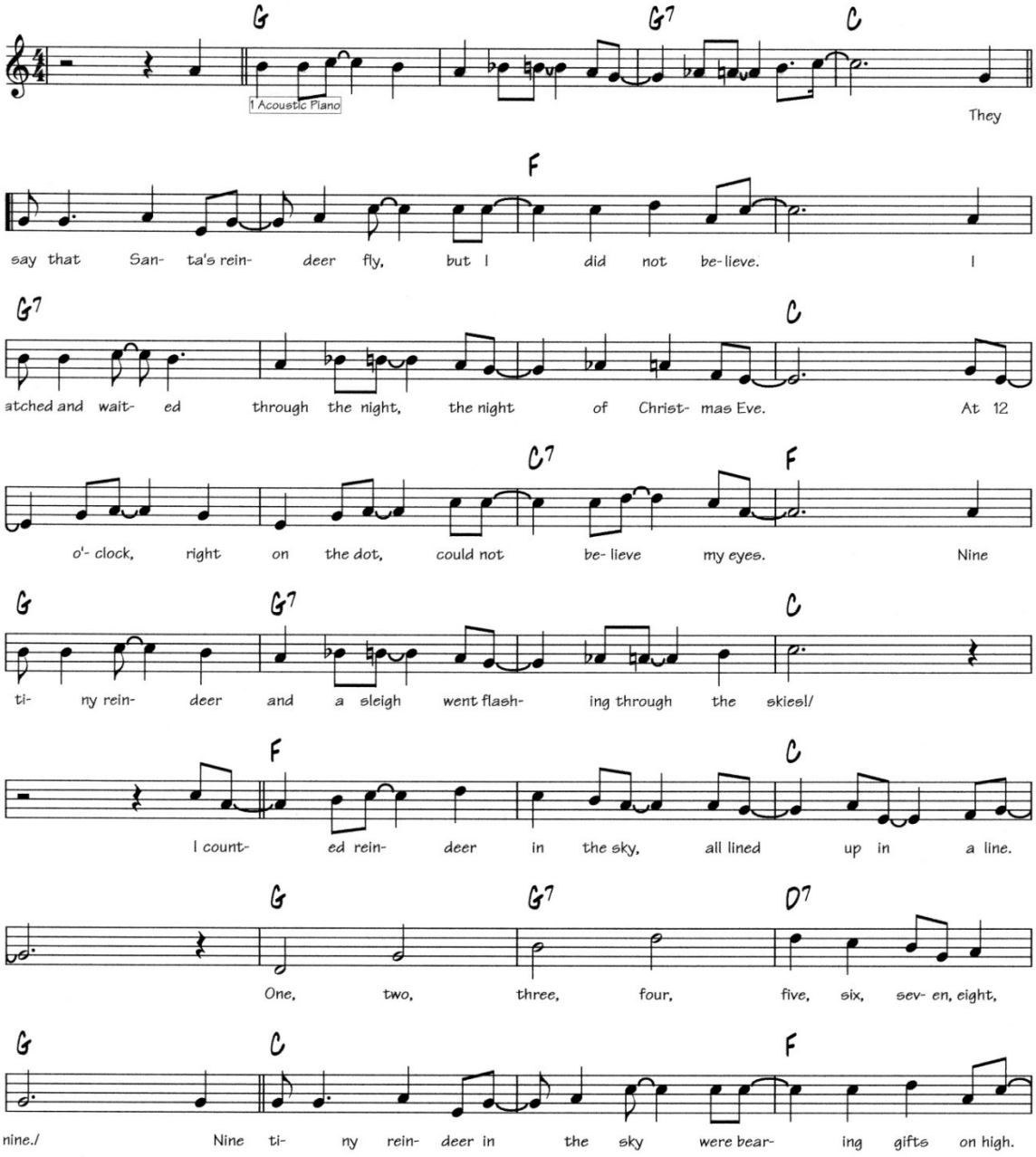


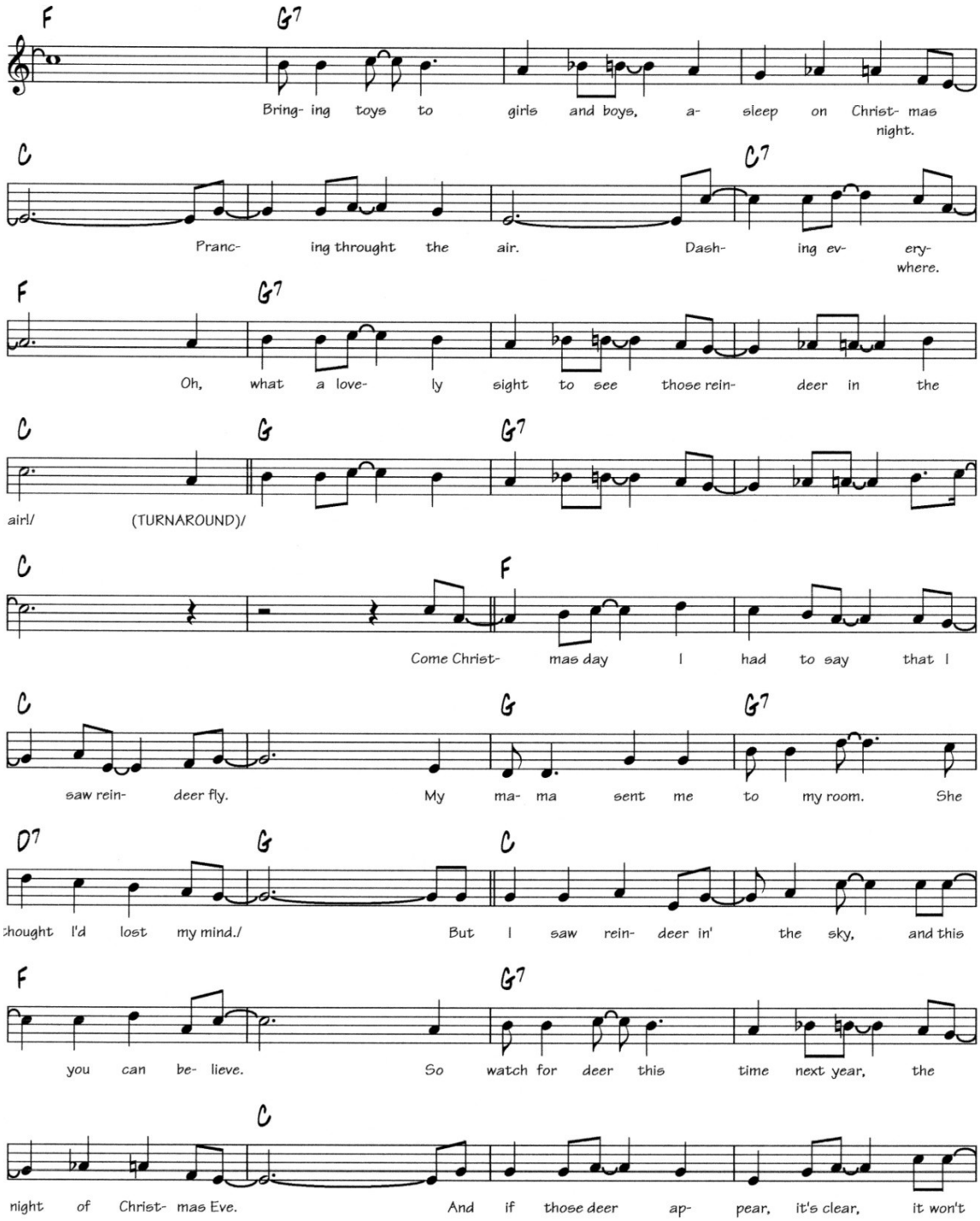
Christmas Is A Magic Time Of Year - Page 4

Santa's Reindeer Fly!

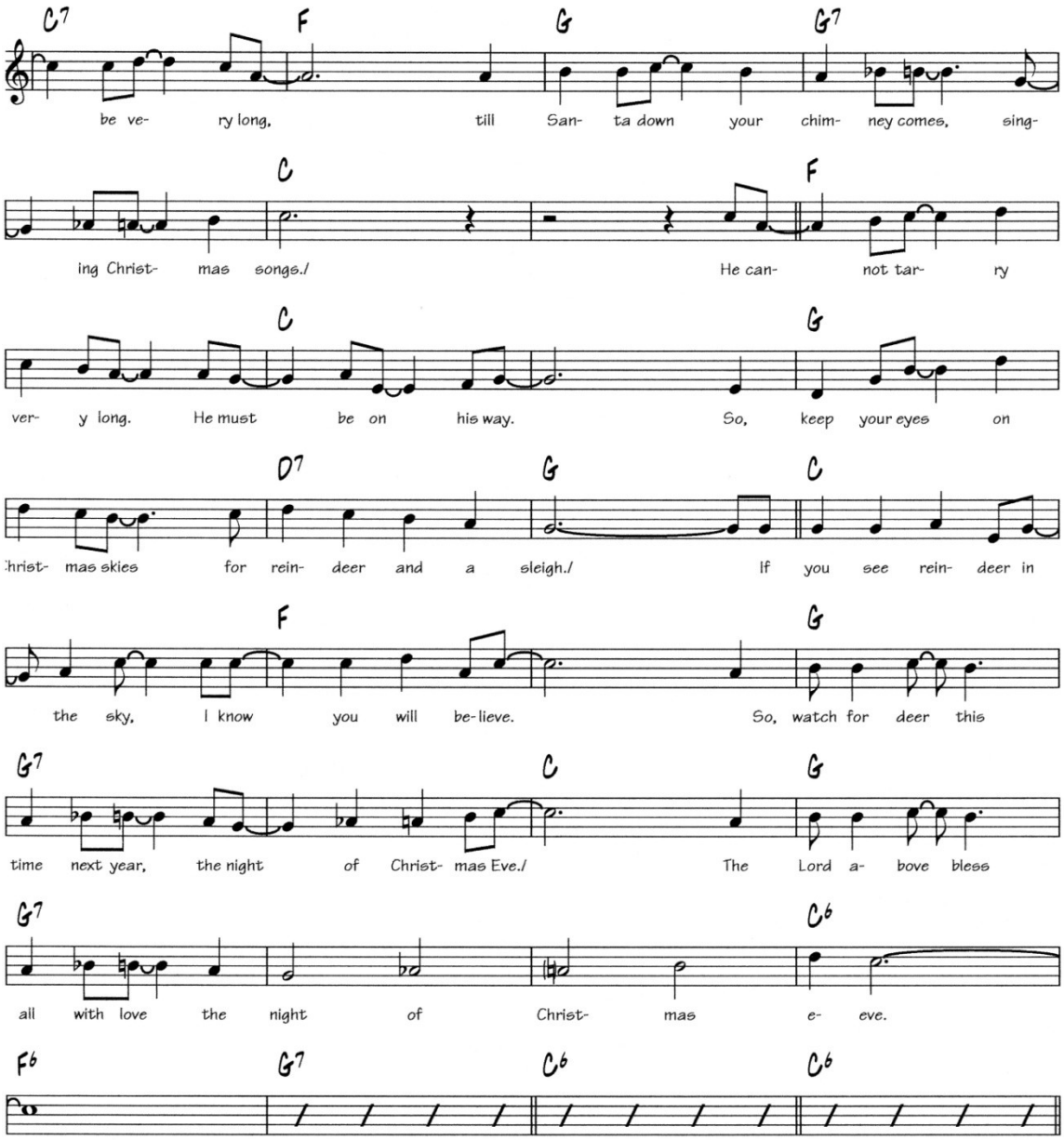
By: Lyndell R Martin
© 2011 Words & Music

Tempo = 147





Santa's Reindeer Fly! - Page 2

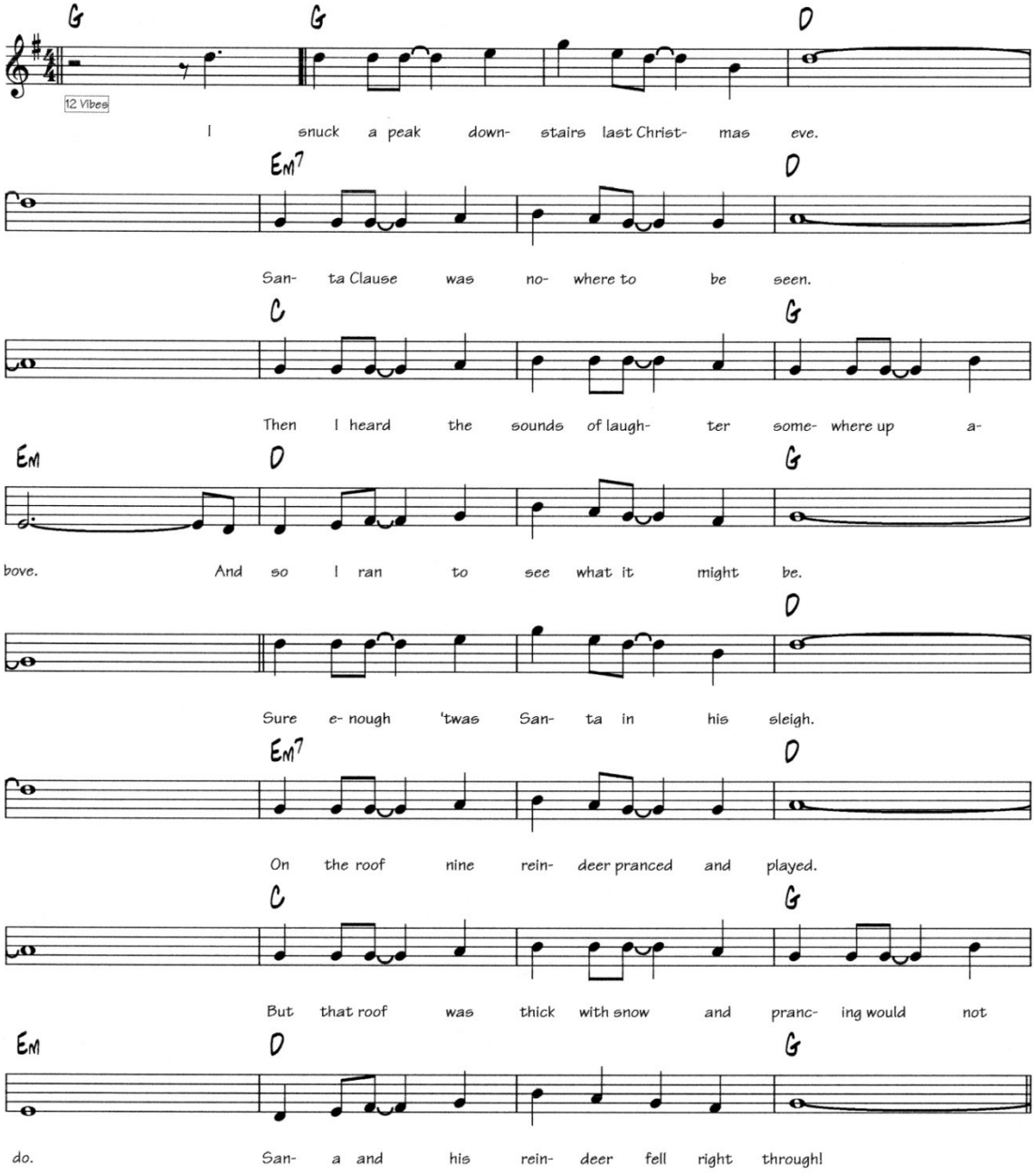


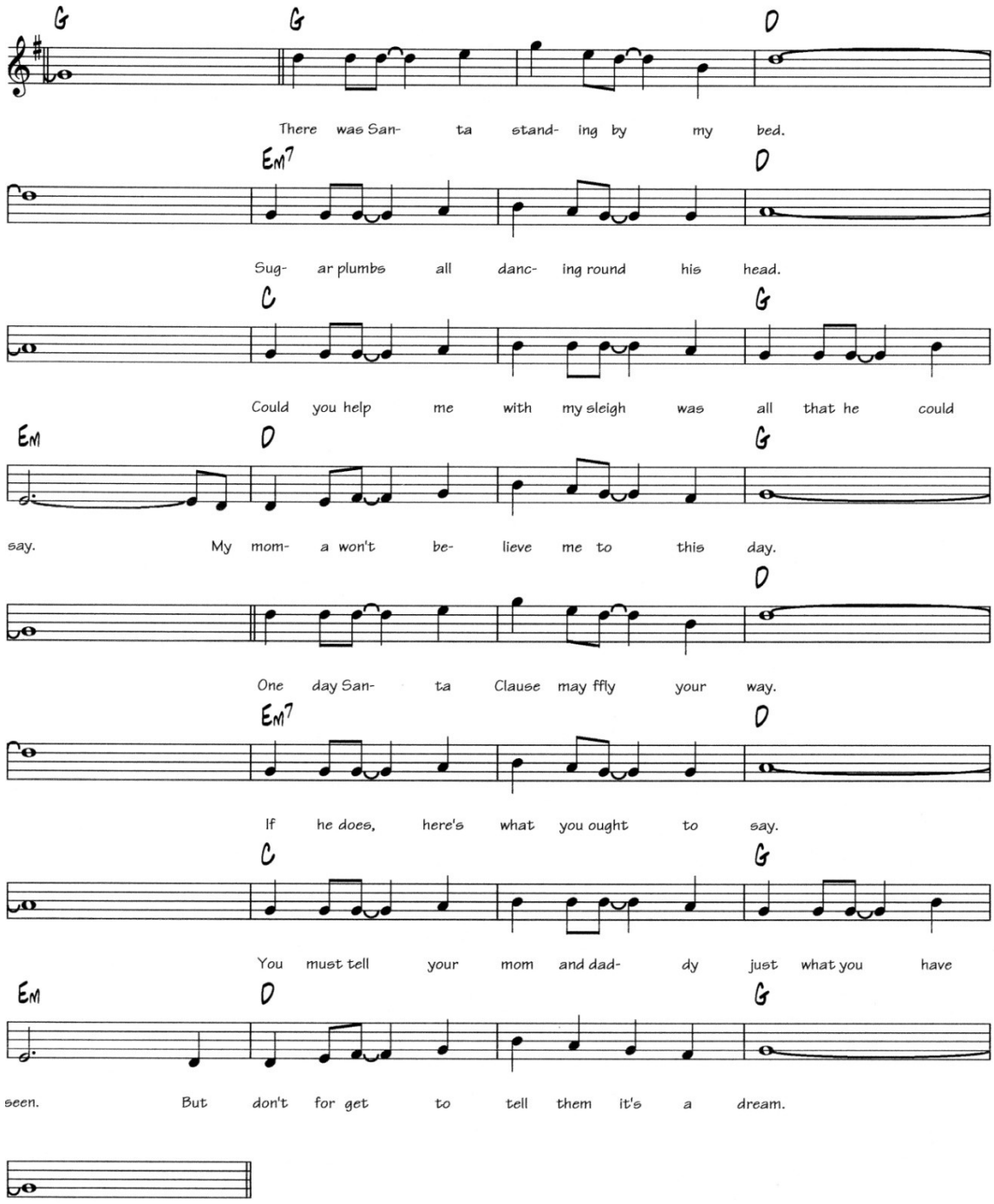
Santa's Reindeer Fly! - Page 3

SANTA'S VISIT

By: Lyndell R Maratin
© Words & Music

Tempo = 145



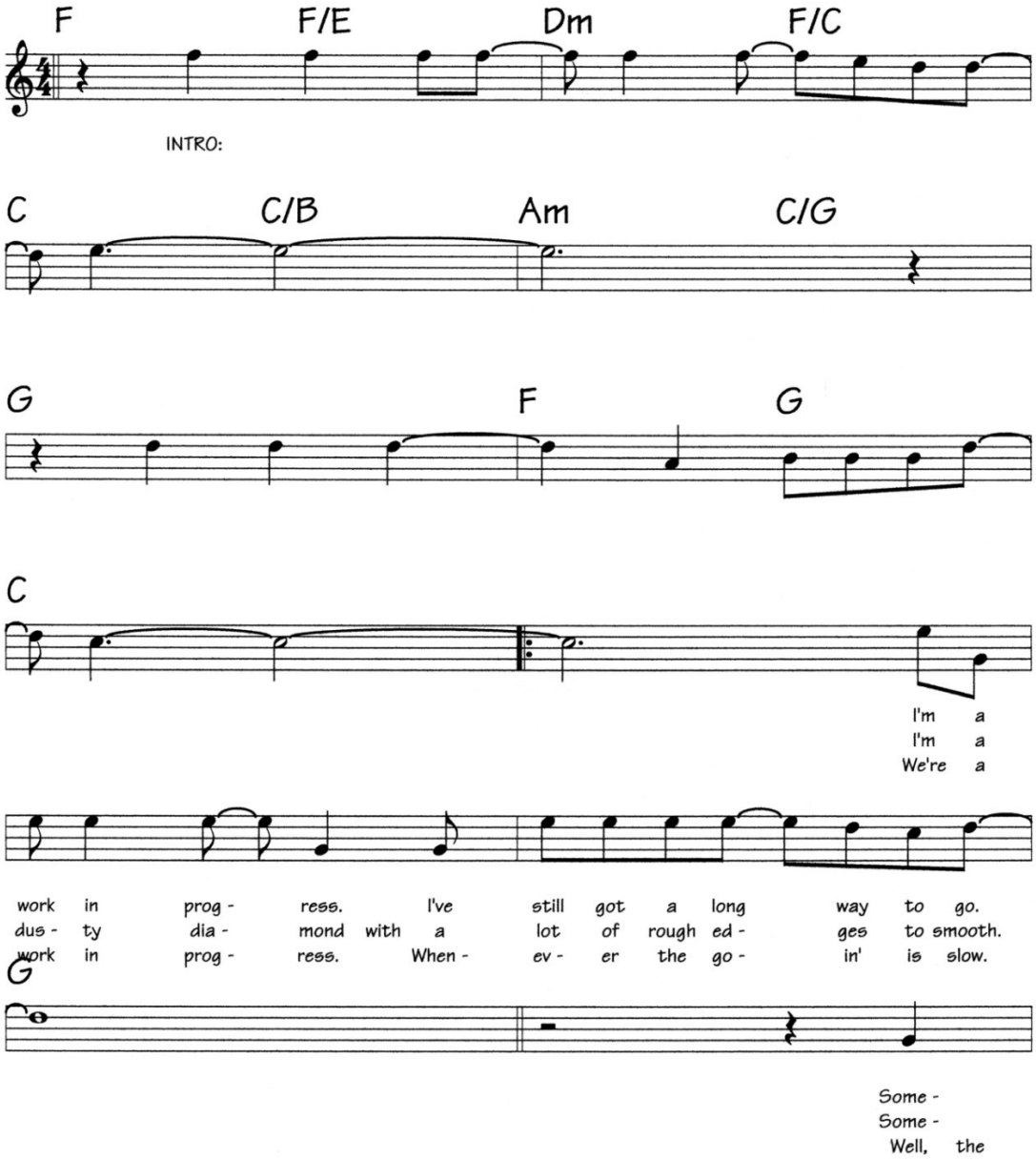


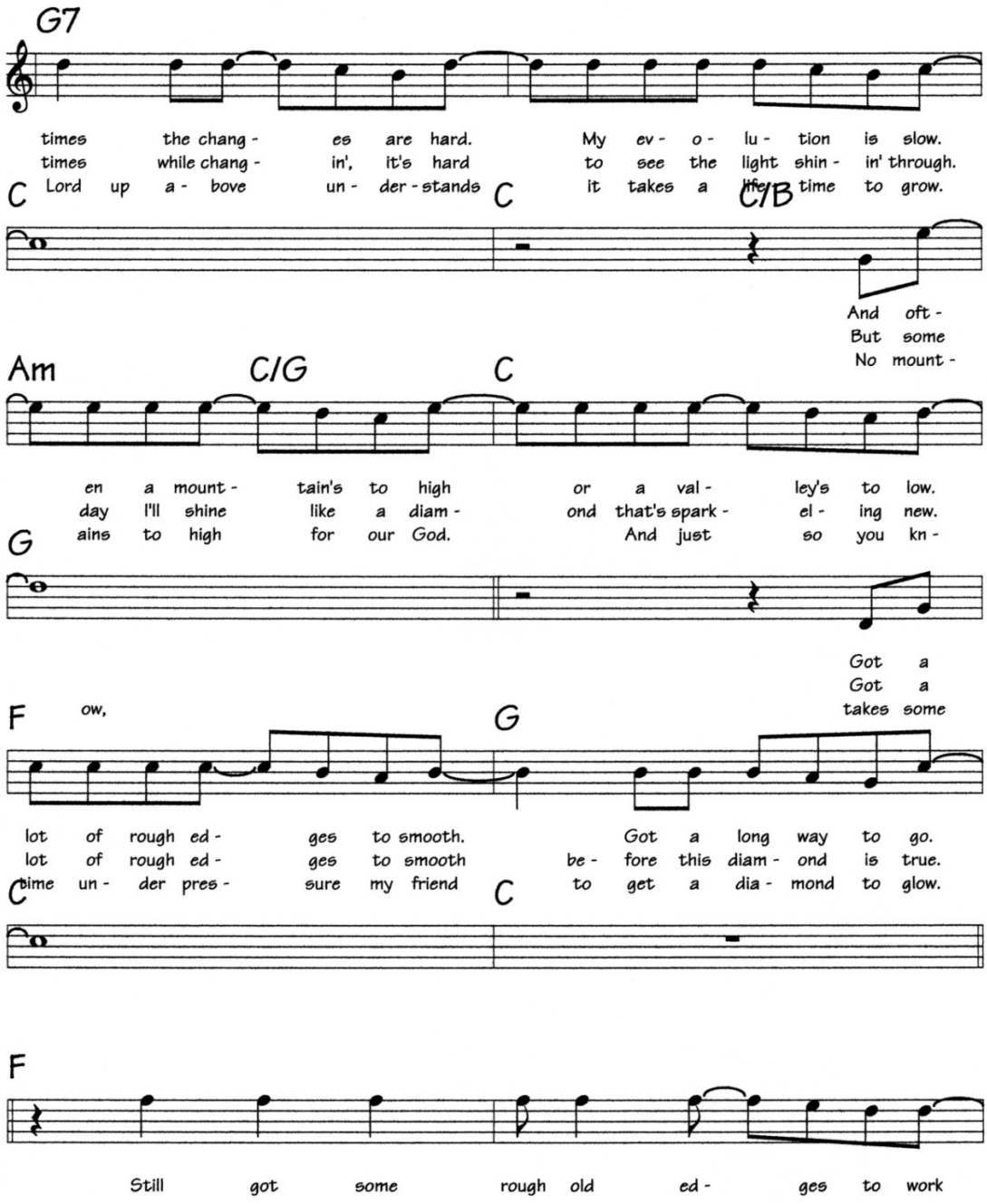
SANTA'S VISIT - Page 2

Rough Edges

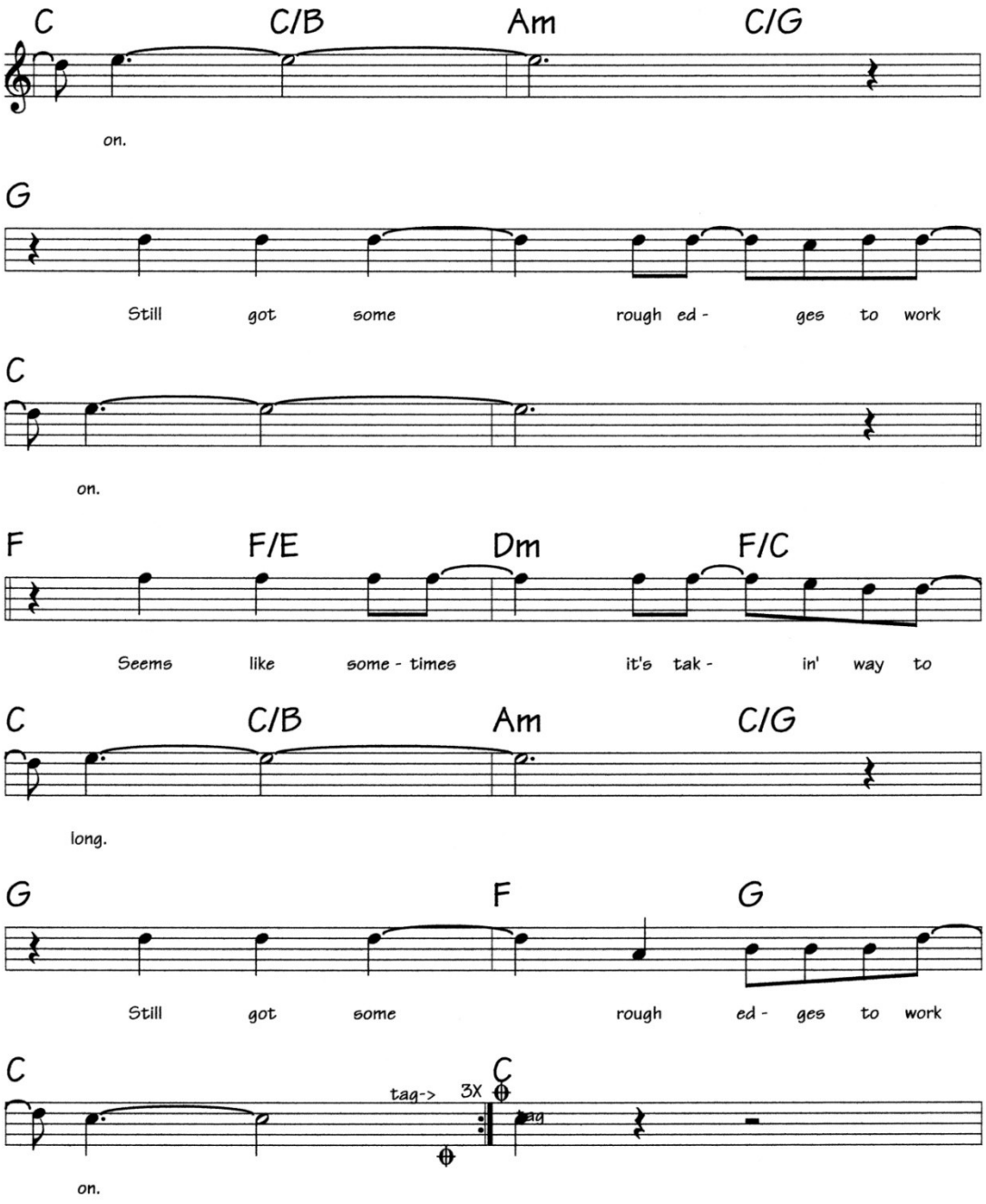
By: Lyndell R. Martin
© June 30, 2009

Tempo = 133

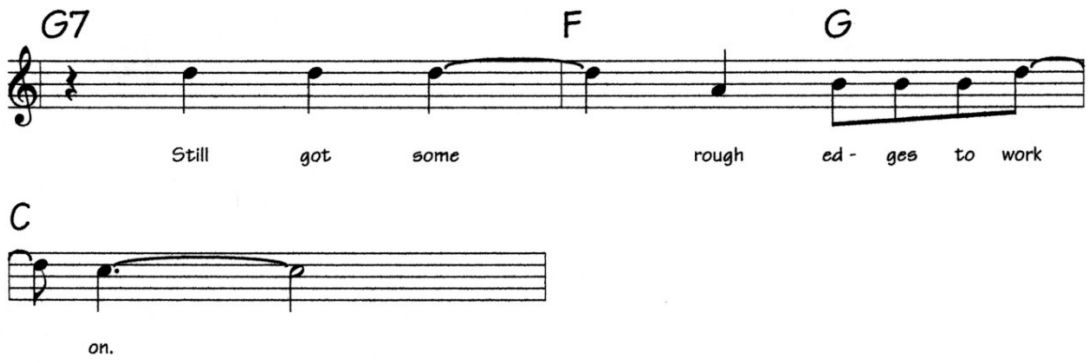




Rough Edges - Page 2



Rough Edges - Page 3

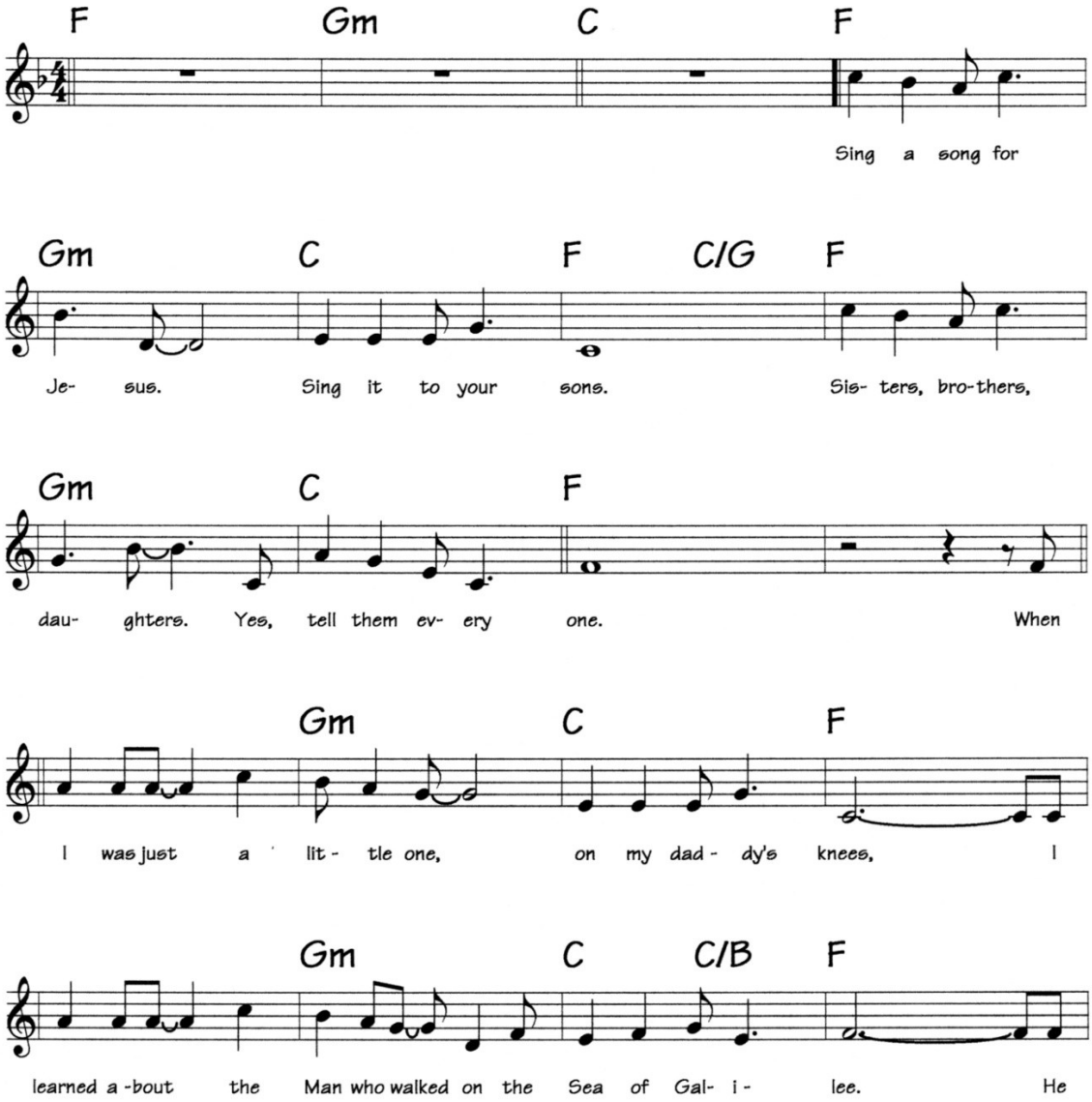


Rough Edges - Page 4

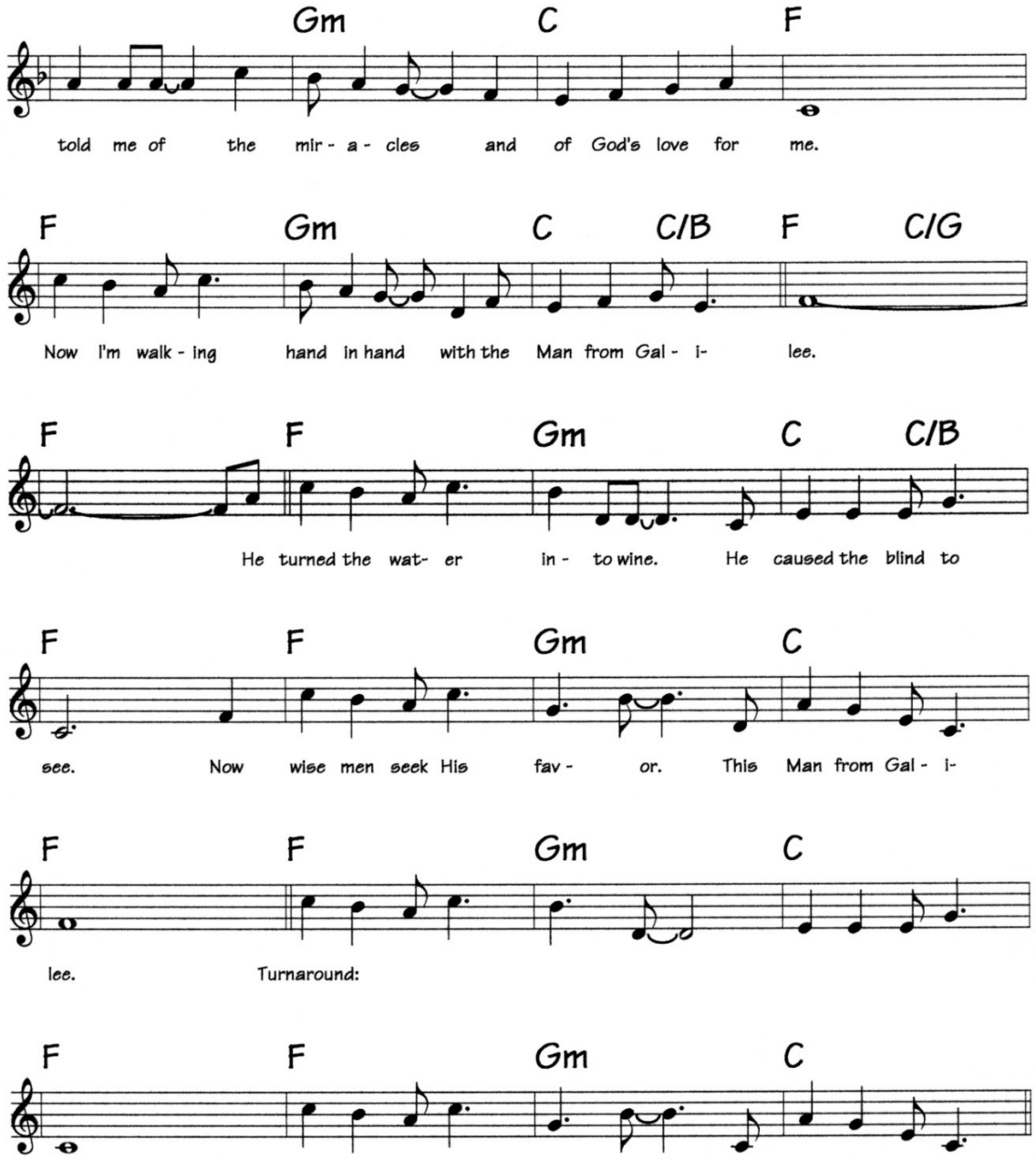
ON DADDY'S KNEE

For My Family
Tempo = 130

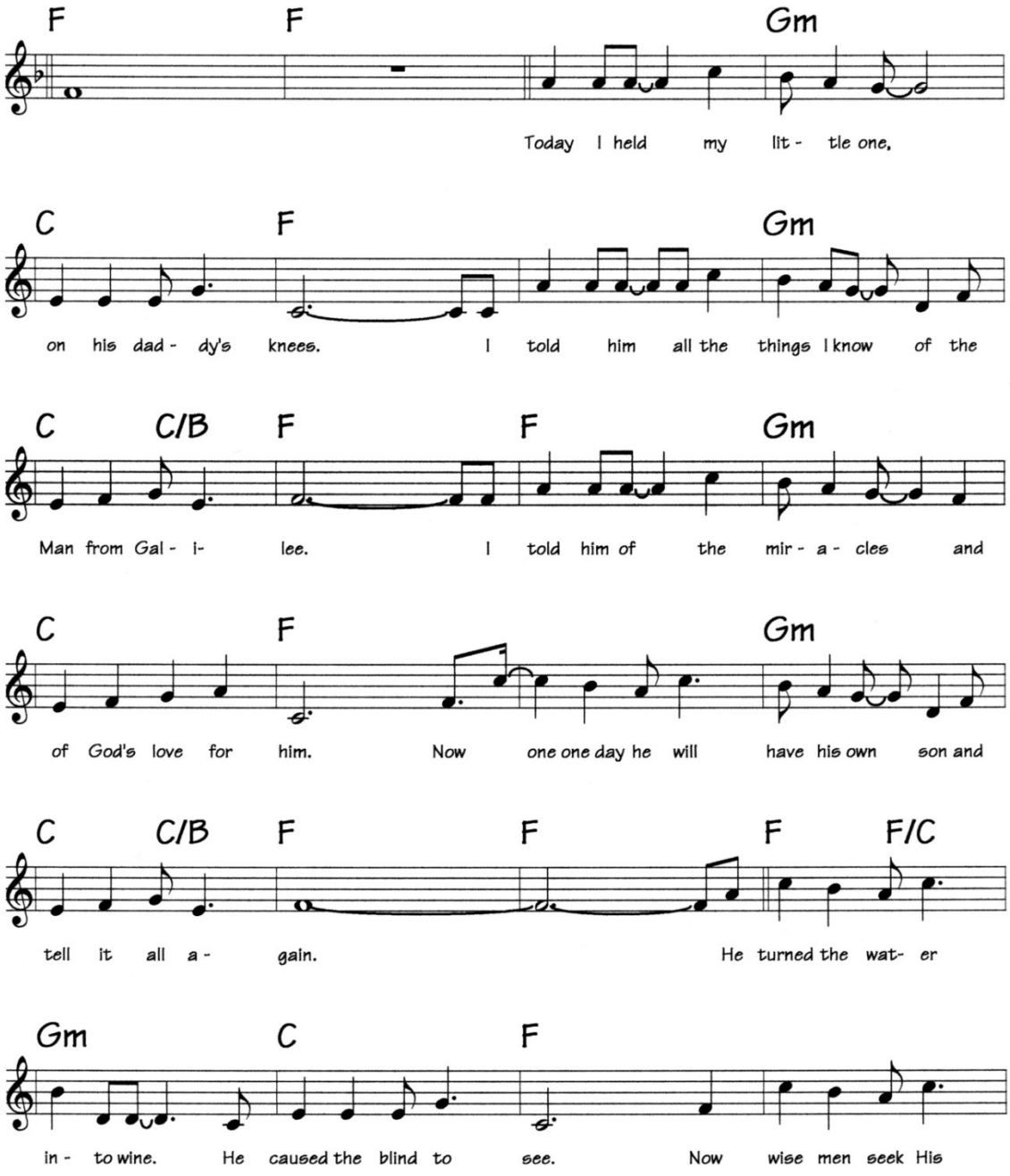
By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1995



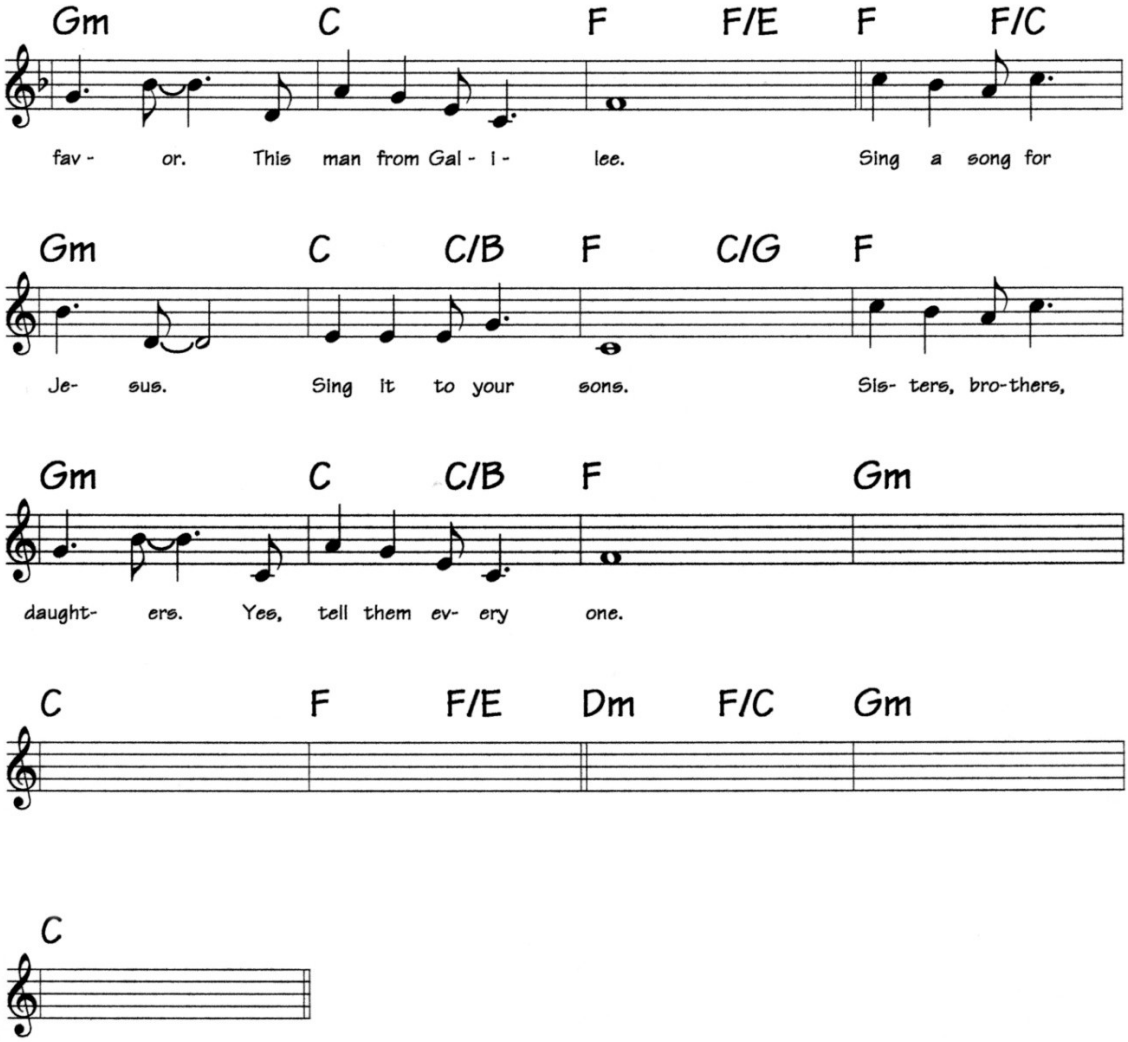
© 1995



ON DADDY'S KNEE - Page 2



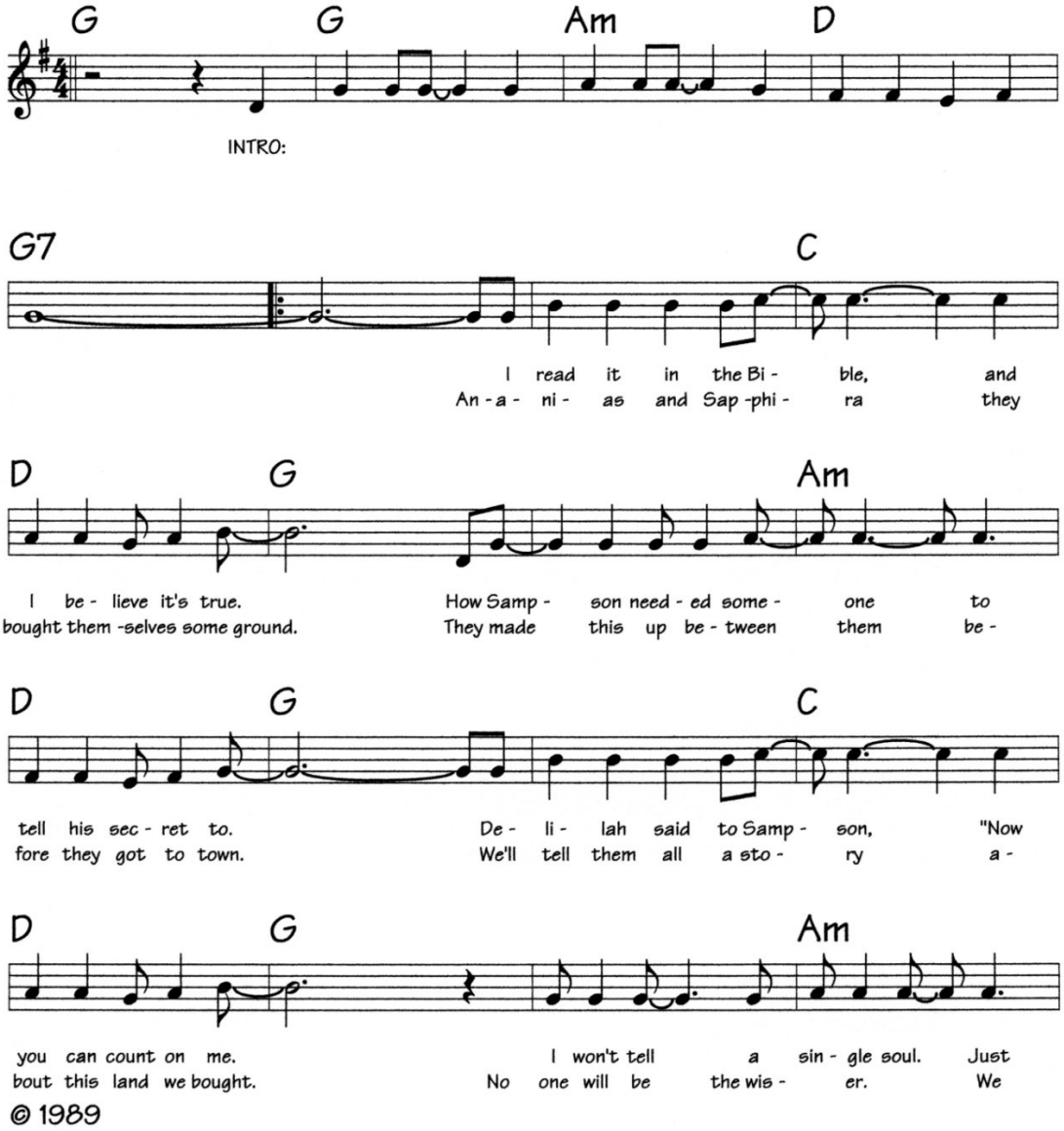
ON DADDY'S KNEE - Page 3


Gm C F F/E F F/C
fav - or. This man from Gal - i - lee. Sing a song for
Gm C C/B F C/G F
Je- sus. Sing it to your sons. Sis- ters, bro-thers,
Gm C C/B F Gm
daught- ers. Yes, tell them ev- ery one.
C F F/E Dm F/C Gm
C

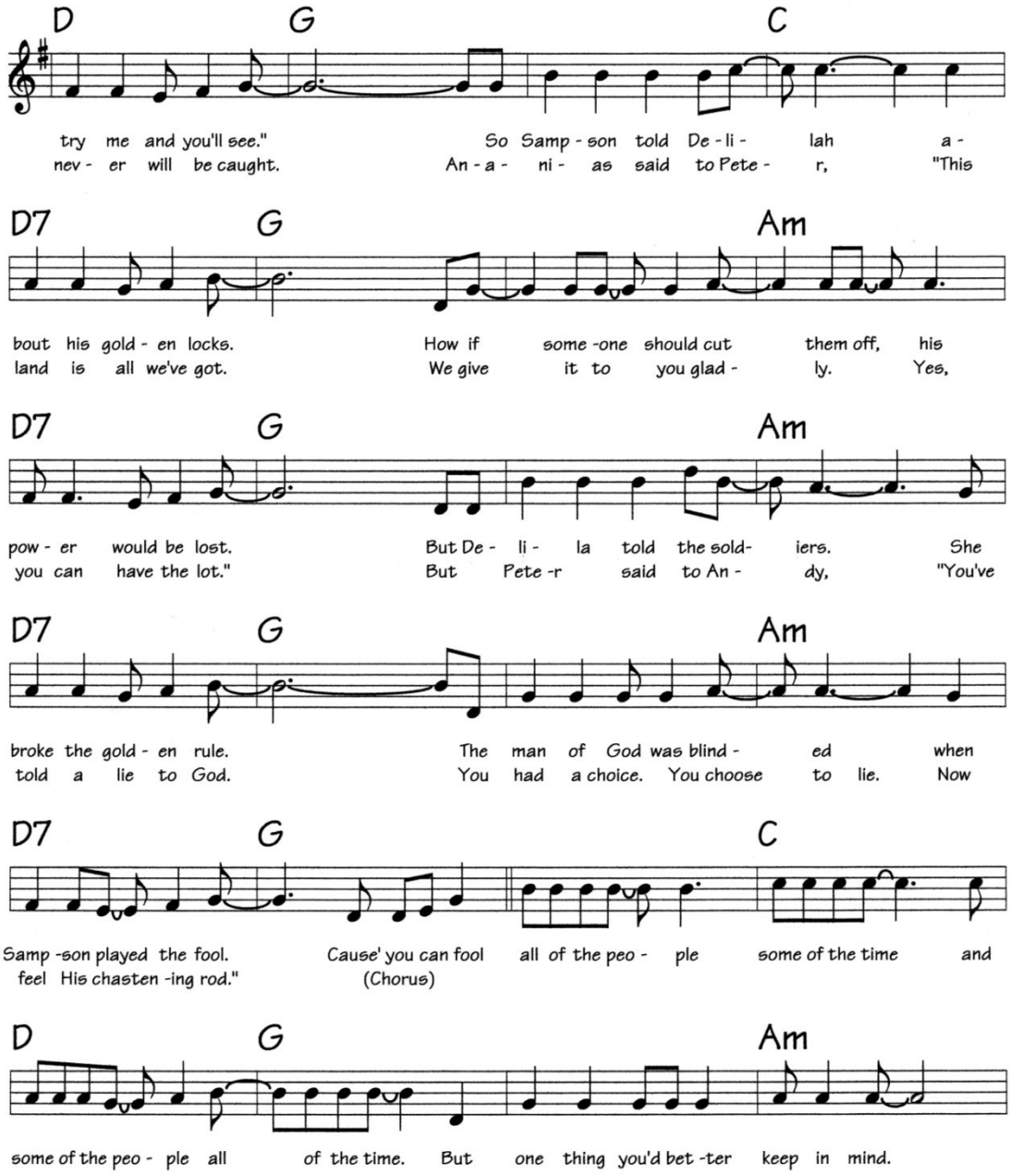
YOU CAN'T FOOL GOD

By: Lyndell R. Martin

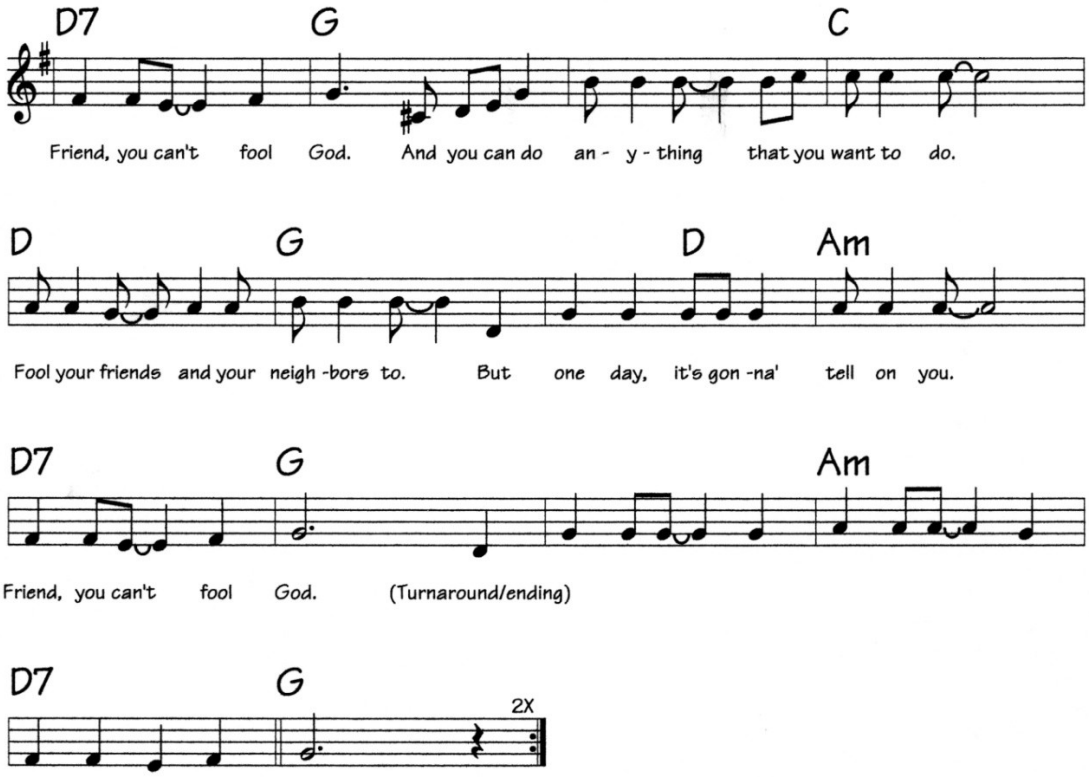
Tempo = 140



© 1989



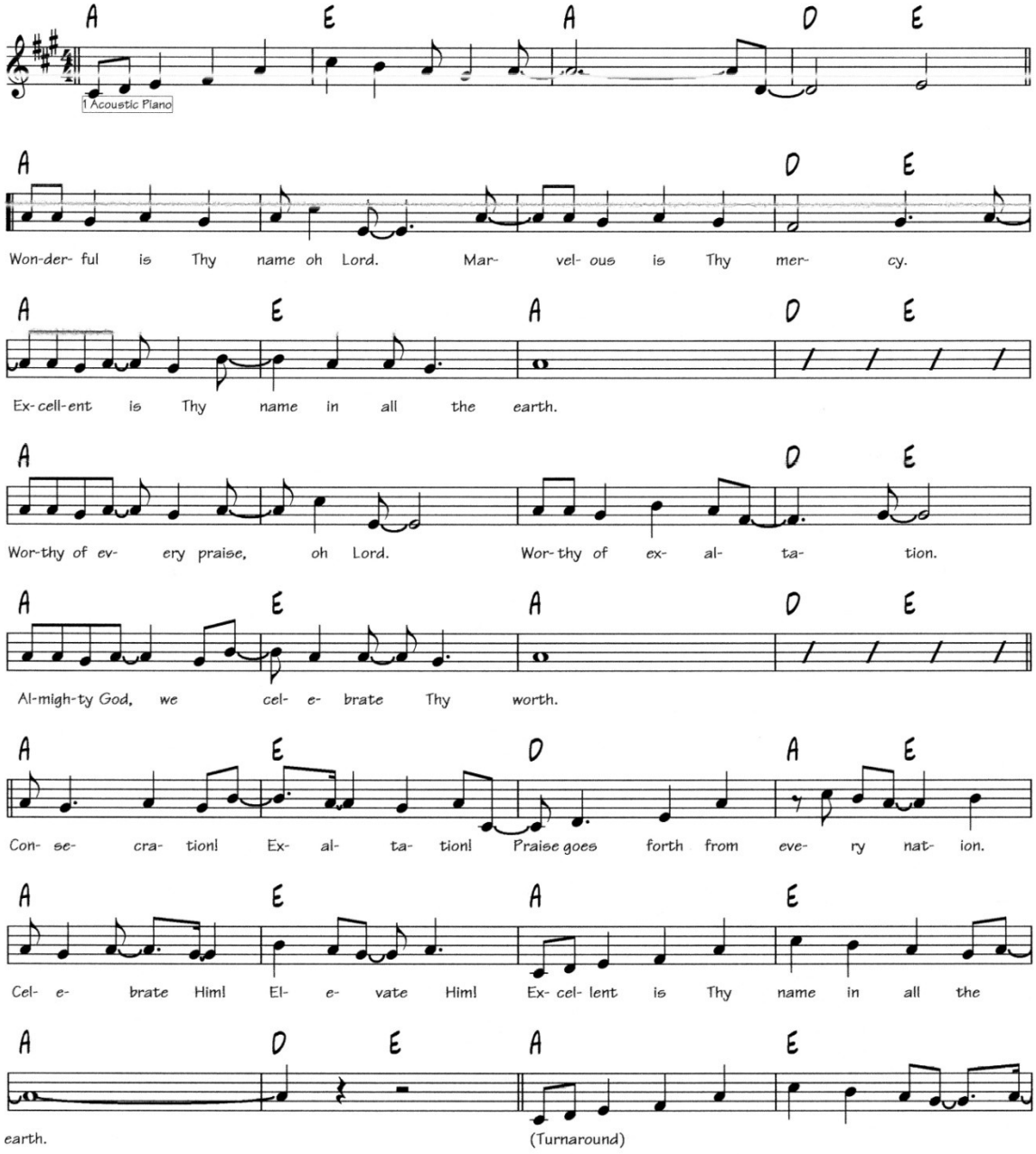
YOU CAN'T FOOL GOD - Page 2

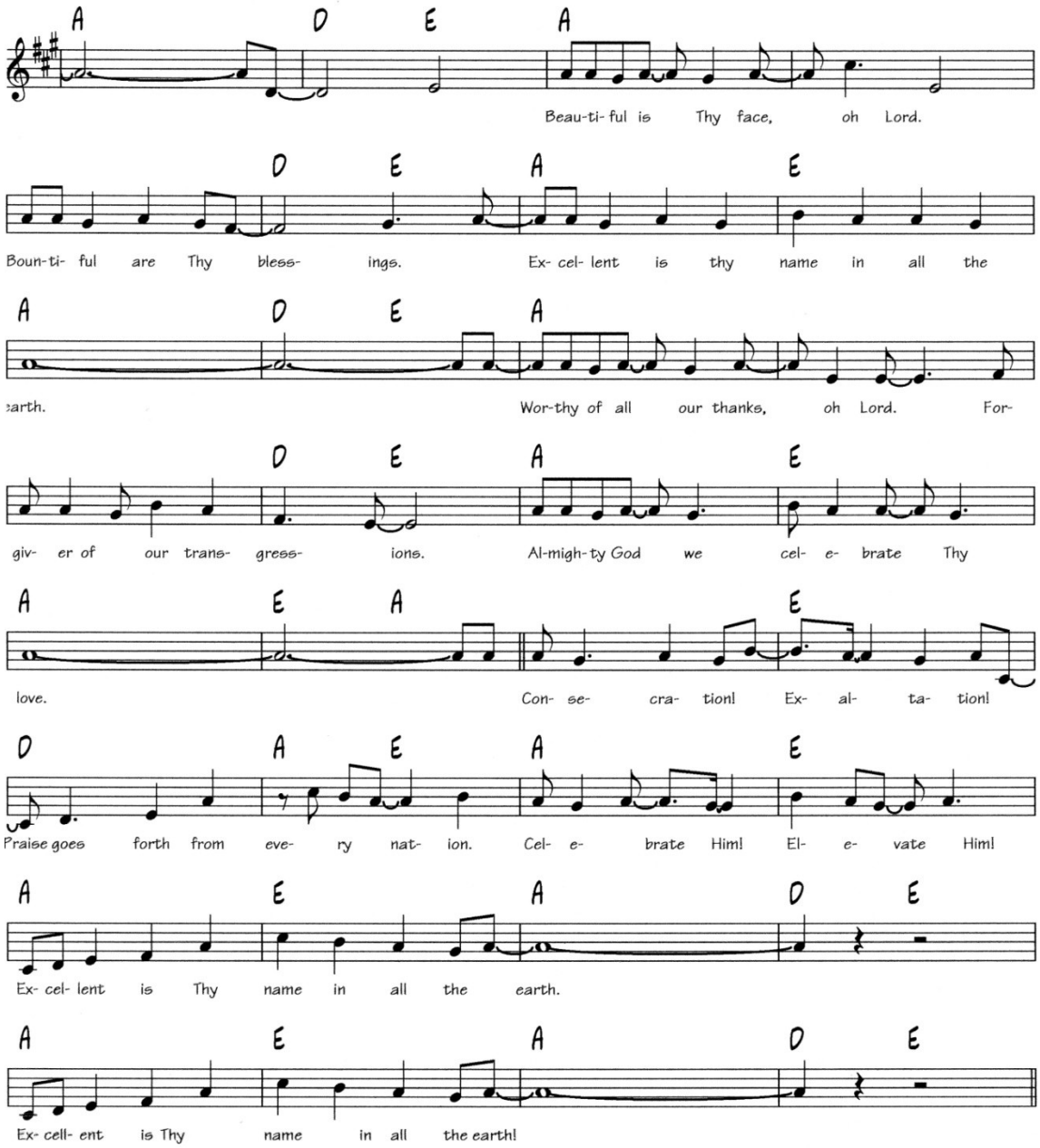

D7 G C
Friend, you can't fool God. And you can do an - y - thing that you want to do.
D G D Am
Fool your friends and your neigh -bors to. But one day, it's gon -na' tell on you.
D7 G Am
Friend, you can't fool God. (Turnaround/ending)
D7 G
2X

Excellent Is Thy Name Oh Lord

Praise & Worship Style
Tempo = 135

By: Lyndell R Martin
©2008 Words & Music





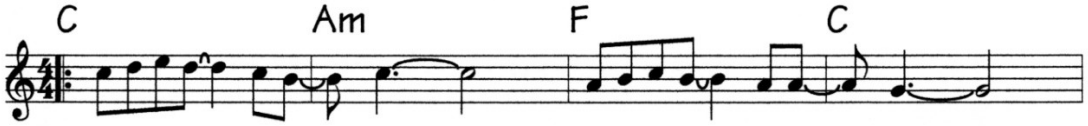
Excellent Is Thy Name Oh Lord - Page 2

We Face The Storms Together

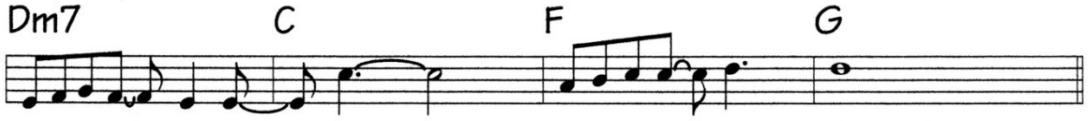
WRITTEN FOR JASON
LRM

By : Lyndell R. Martin
© 1996

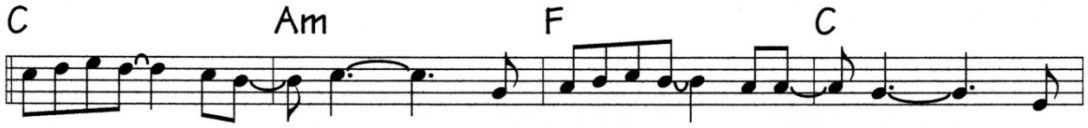
Tempo = 100



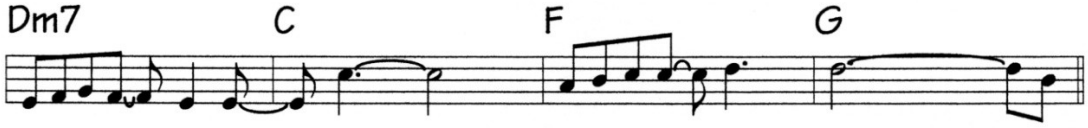
Intro & Turnaround:



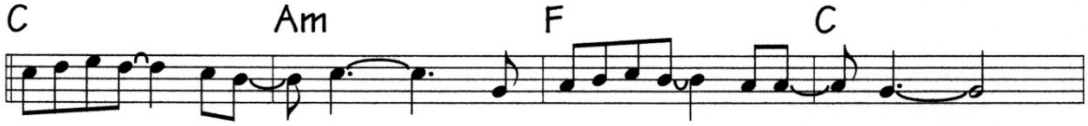
Re -



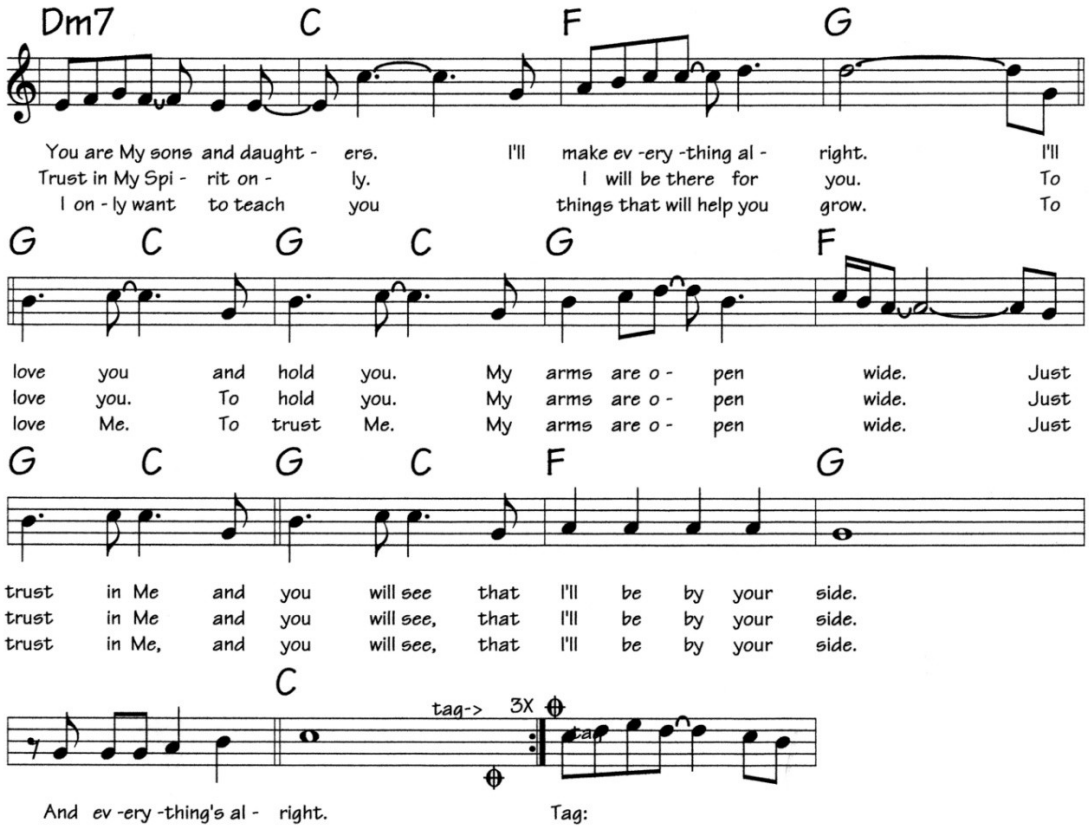
Of- ten the storm clouds gath - er, and life can be hard to be - ar. But
Un - til your storm is ov - er. Un - til the rain is throu - gh,
mem -ber, the things I tell you, are things that you need to kn - ow.



we face the storms to-geth - er. You know that I'll be there. A
you can lean on My shoul - der. I will be there for you.
I'd nev -er want to hurt you. Not when I love you so.



bridge ov-er trou - bled wa - ters. A light in your dark - est ni - ght.
Think of Me when you're lone - ly. Call on Me when you're bl - ue.
Fol -low the things I tell you. I'll show you the way to go - o.

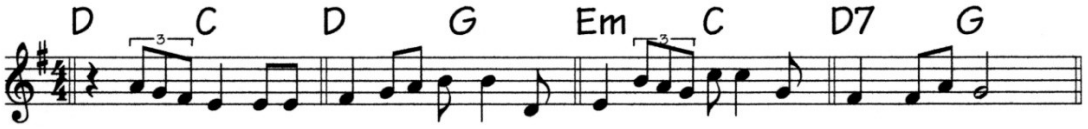


We Face The Storms Together - Page 2

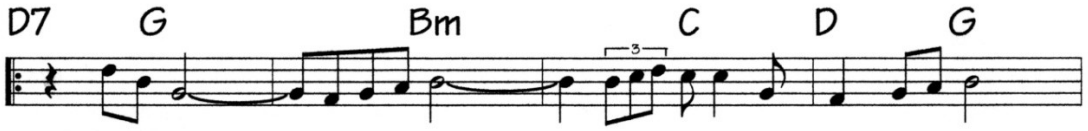
Beyond The Sky

By: Lyndell R. Martin

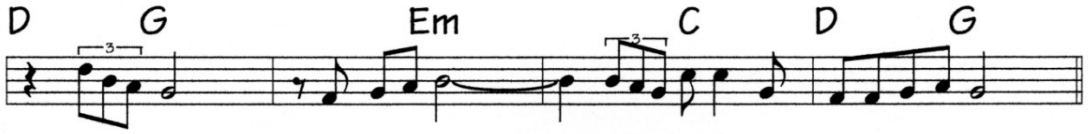
Tempo = 68



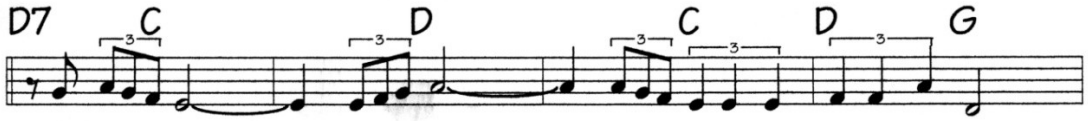
Intro:



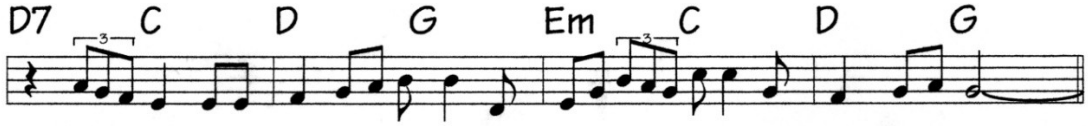
So-me-day, be-yond the sky, We'll be to-geth-er a- gain you and I.
So-me-day, be-yond the sky, There'll be no sor-row, no tears in our eyes.



and we will learn how an-gels fly. We'll be to-ge-ther for- ev- er, you and I.
There will the Son for- ev-er rise, and we'll be to-ge-ther for- ev- er, you and I.



There'll be no more nights. No lone-ly days. For time no lon-ger will stand in our way.

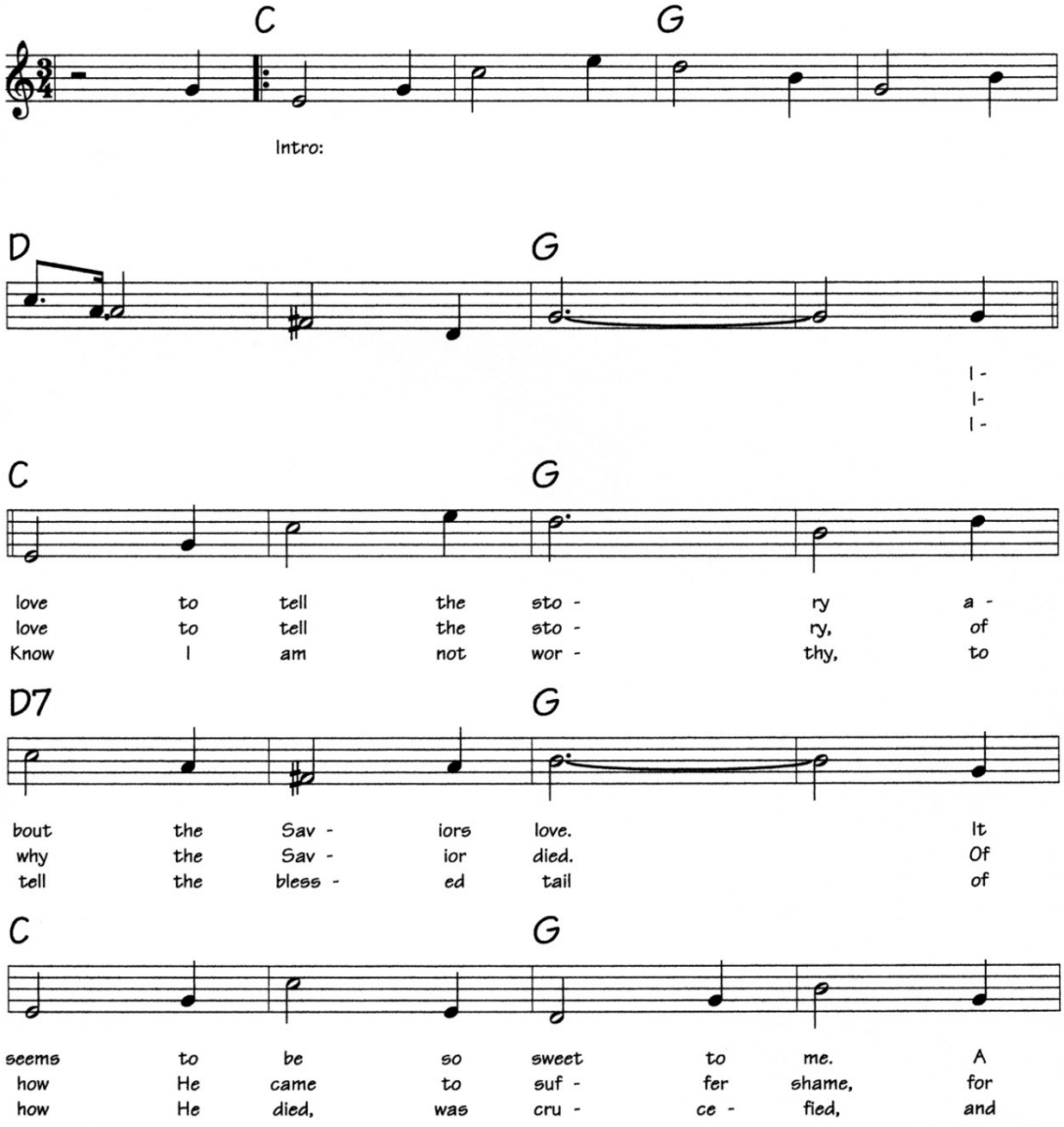


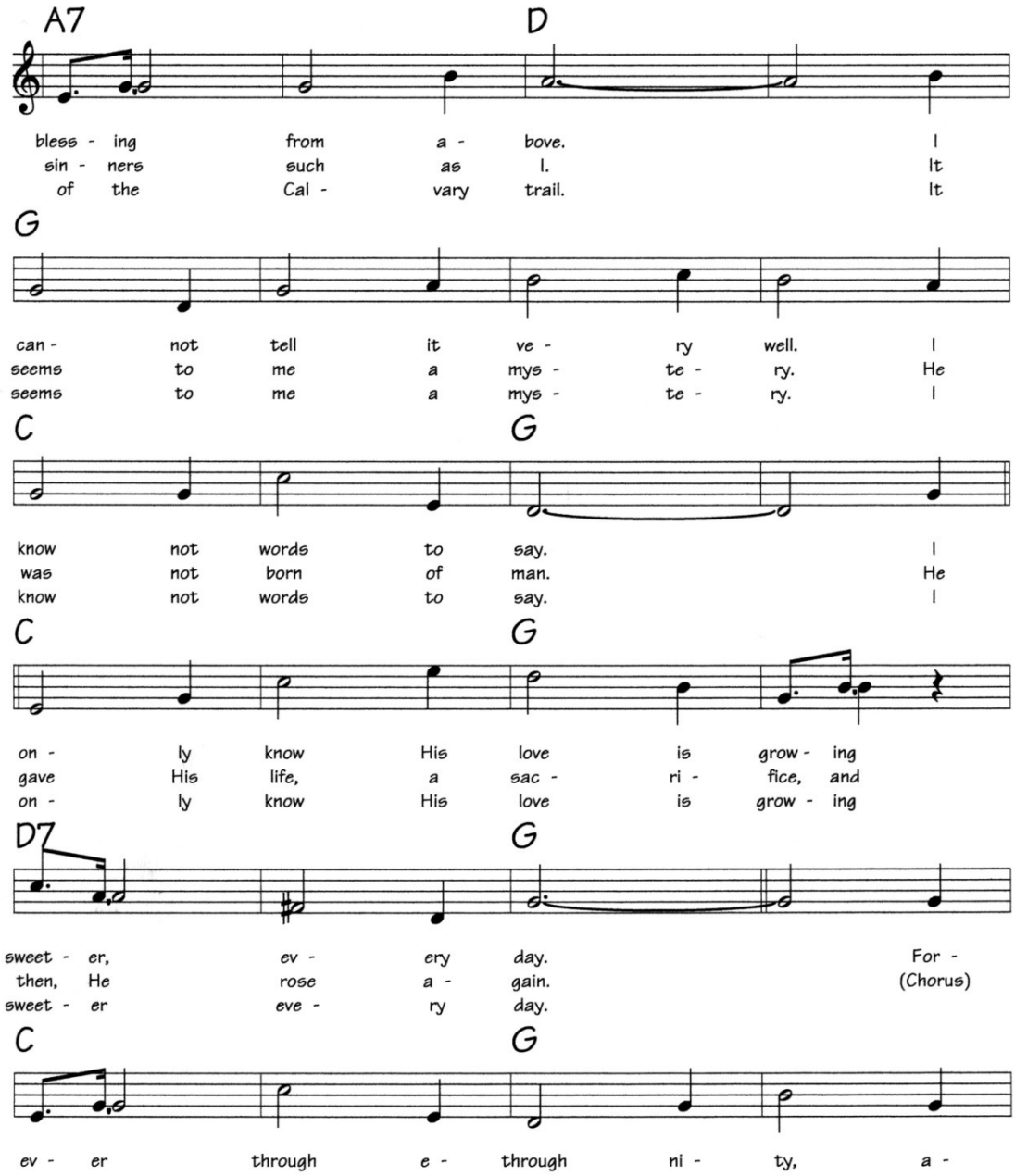
Be-fore you run to the sky, let me tell you good- bye. But we'll be to-geth-er a-gain, you and I.
Be-fore you run to the sky, let me tell you good- bye. But we'll be to-geth-er a-gain, you and I.

The Story Of The Savior's Love

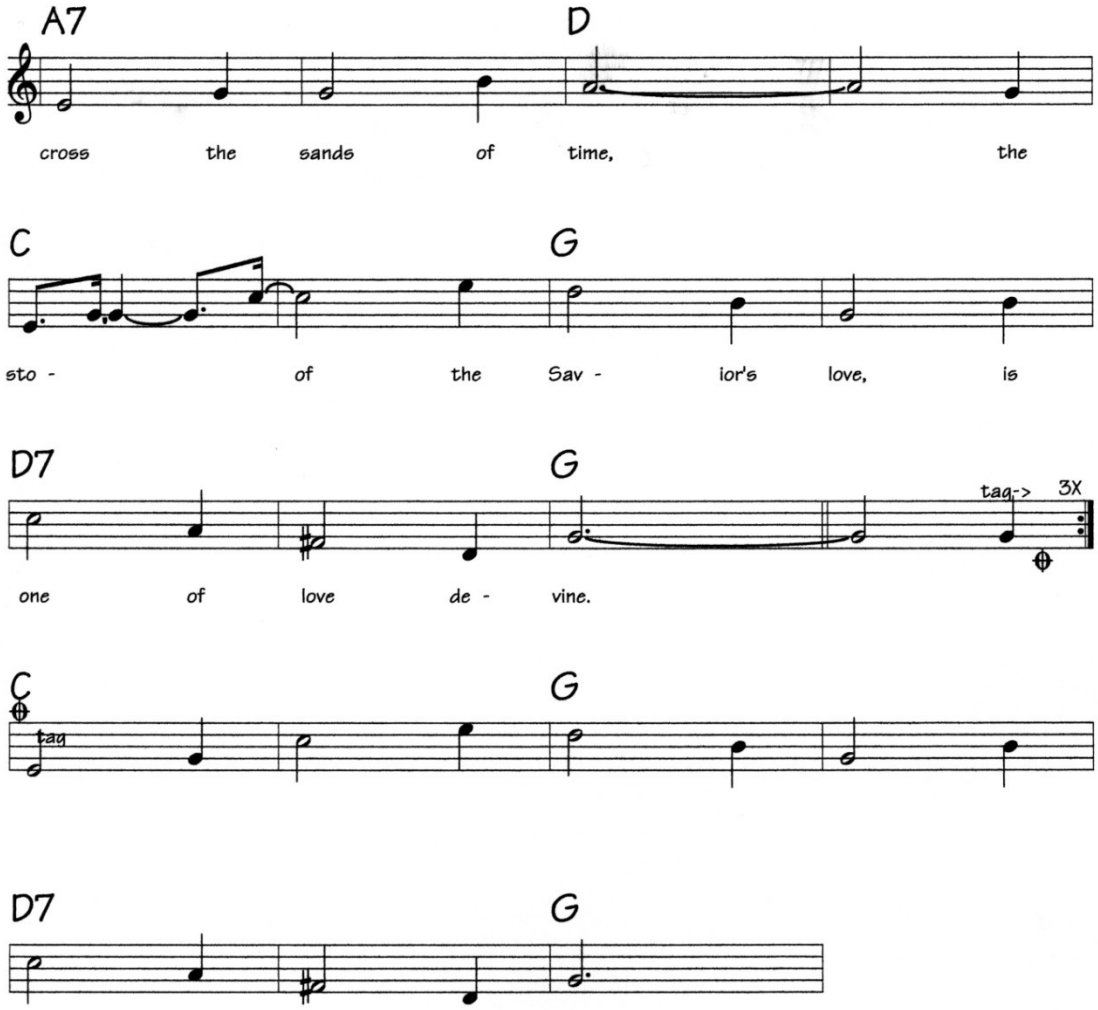
By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1993

Tempo = 140





The Story Of The Savior's Love - Page 2

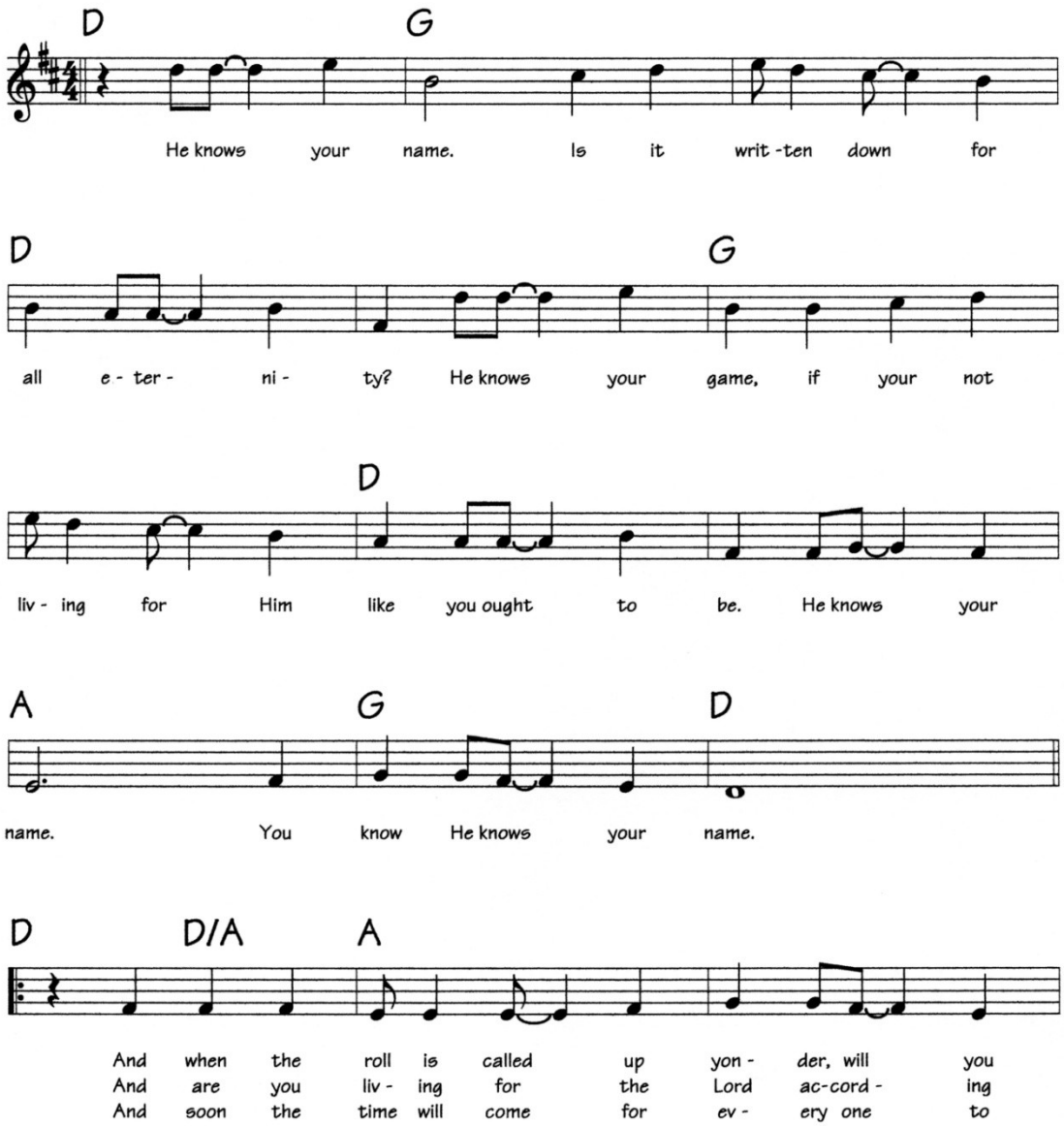


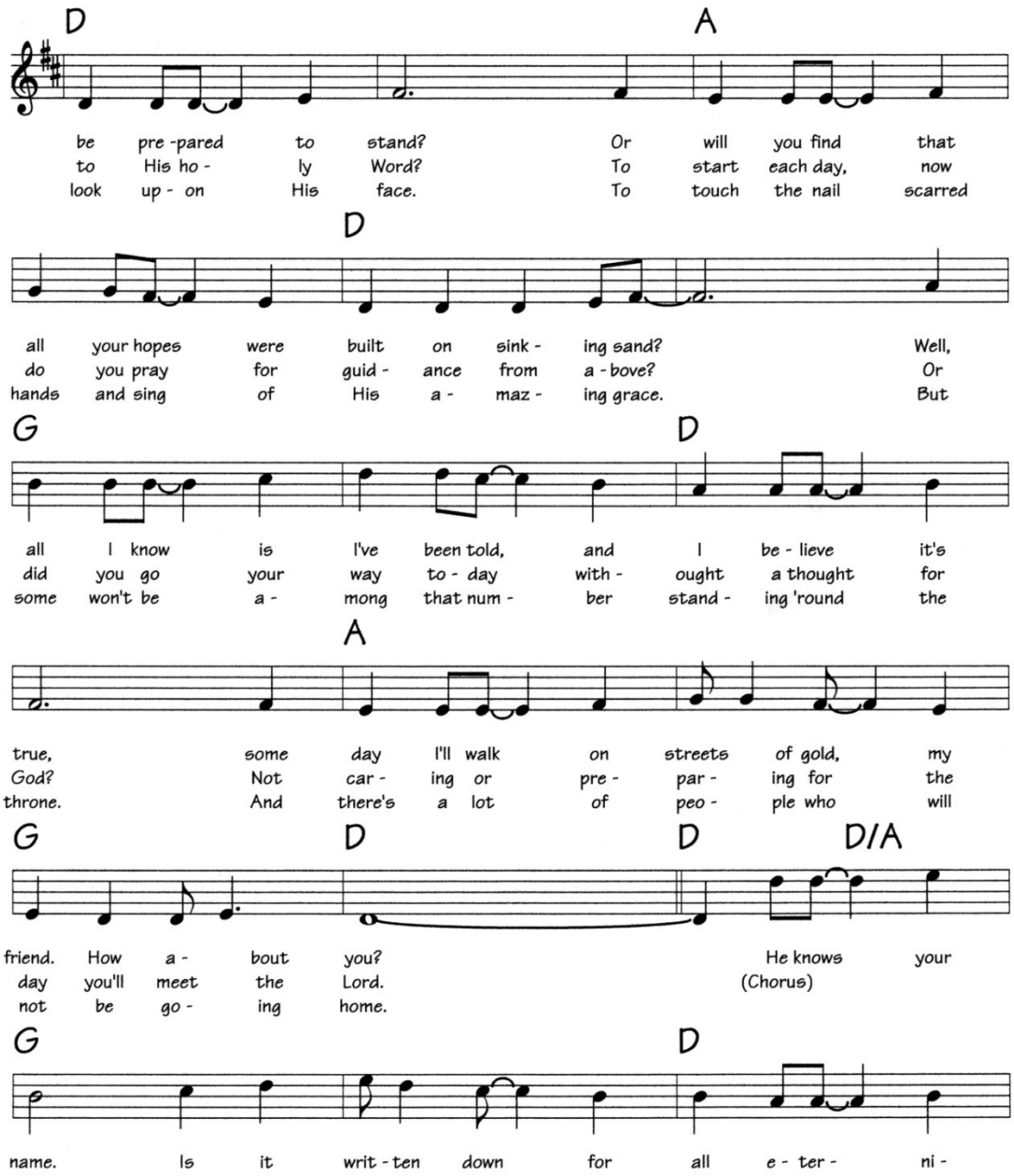
The Story Of The Savior's Love - Page 3

He Knows Your Name

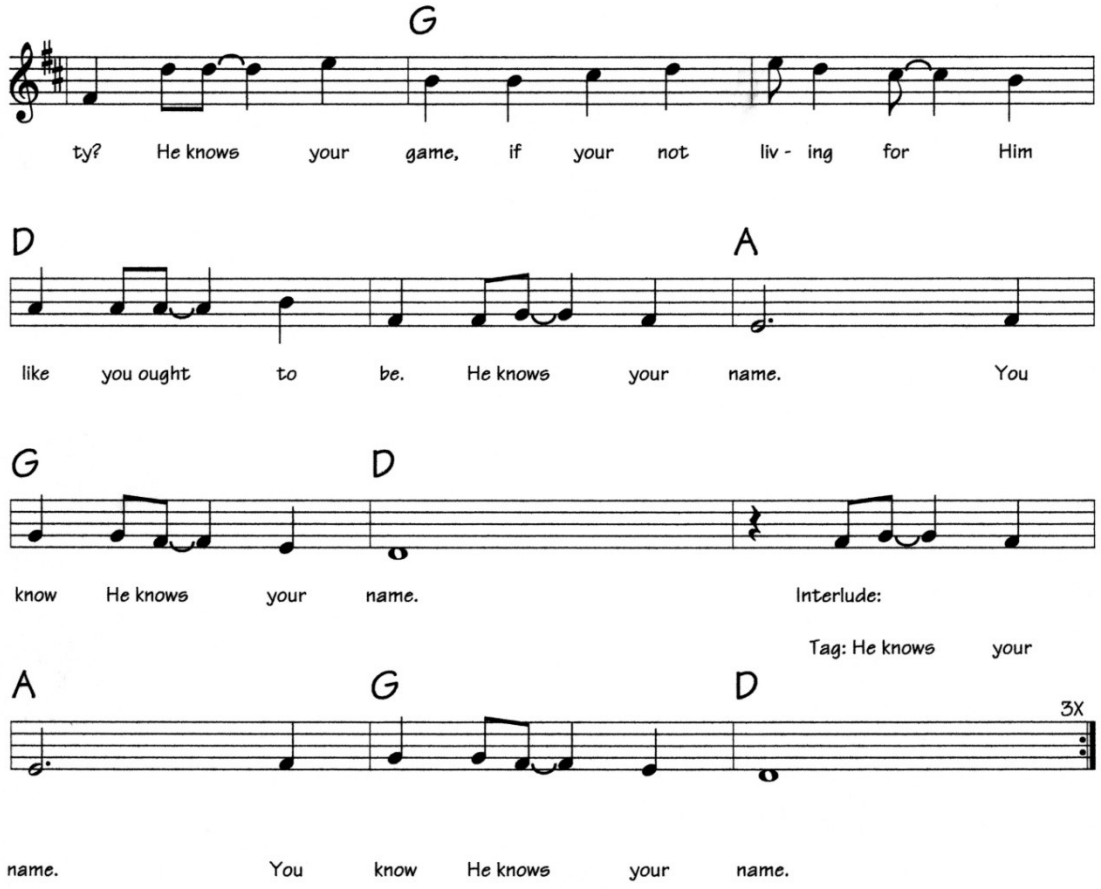
By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1985

Tempo = 140





He Knows Your Name - Page 2

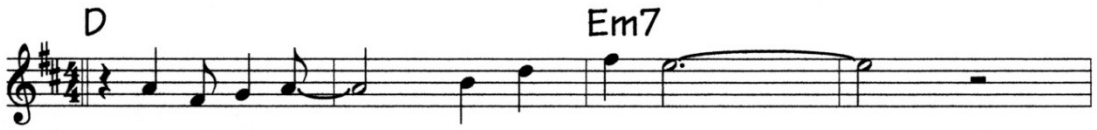


He Knows Your Name - Page 3

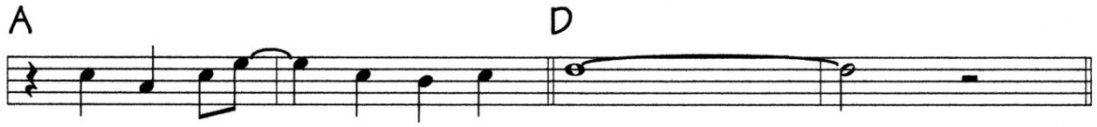
The Passing Years

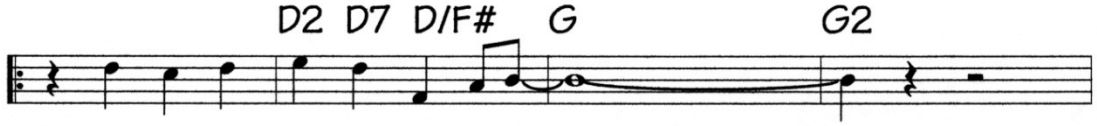
By: Lyndell R. Martin

Tempo = 132

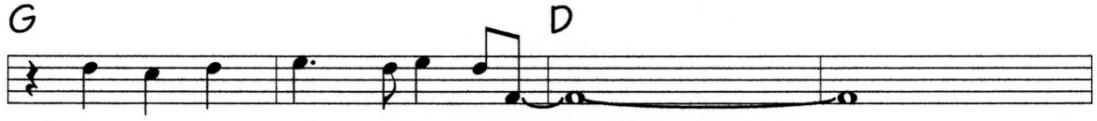


Intro:

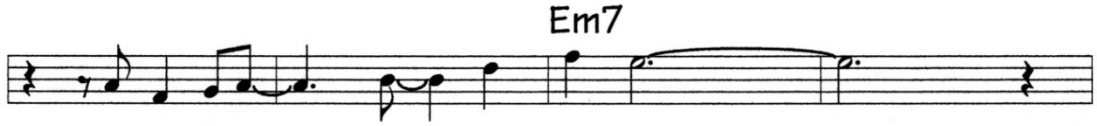




As I look back, I shed a tear.
The winds have blown the years a-way.

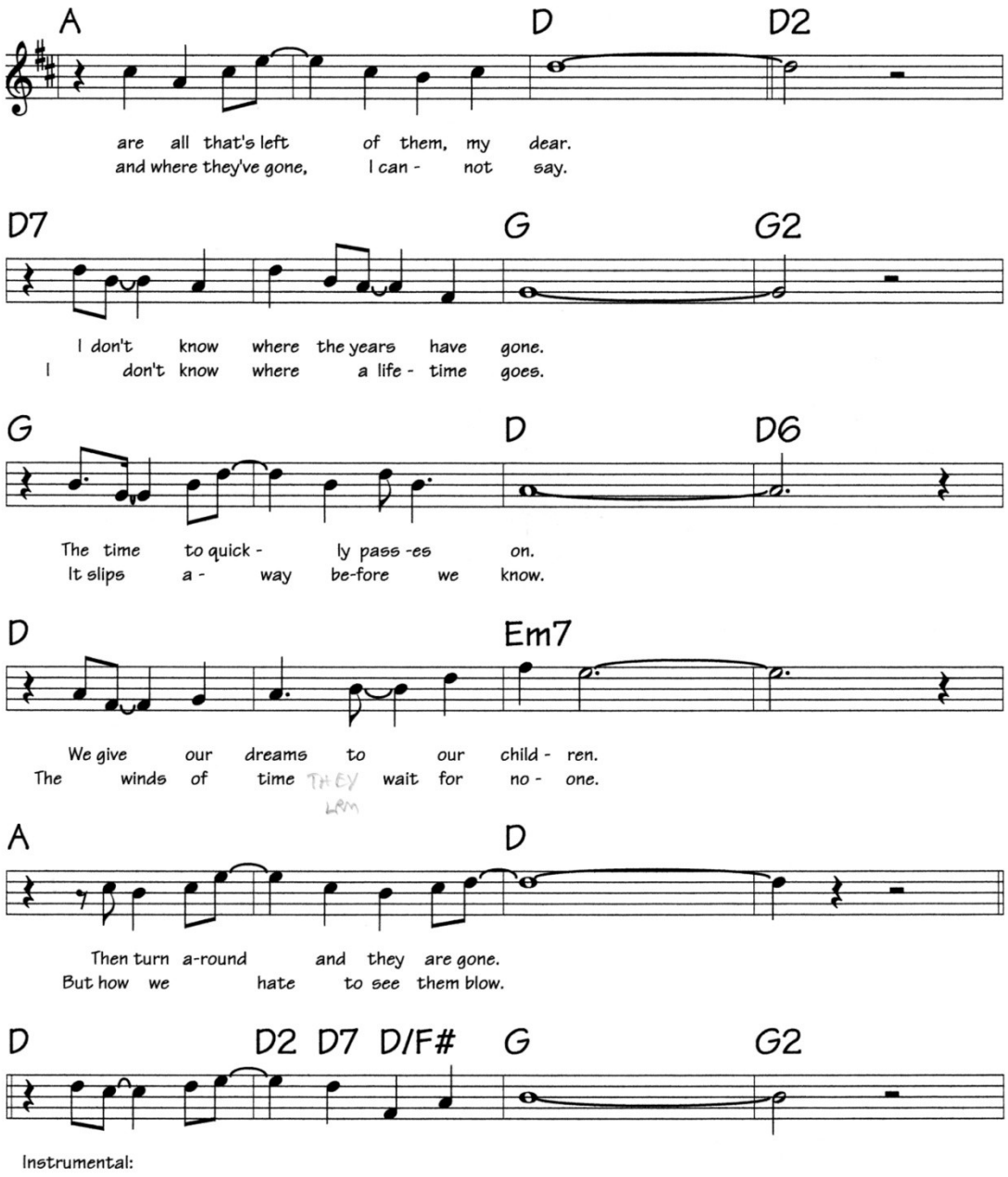


When I re - call the pass -ing years.
To-day they took a-noth - er day.

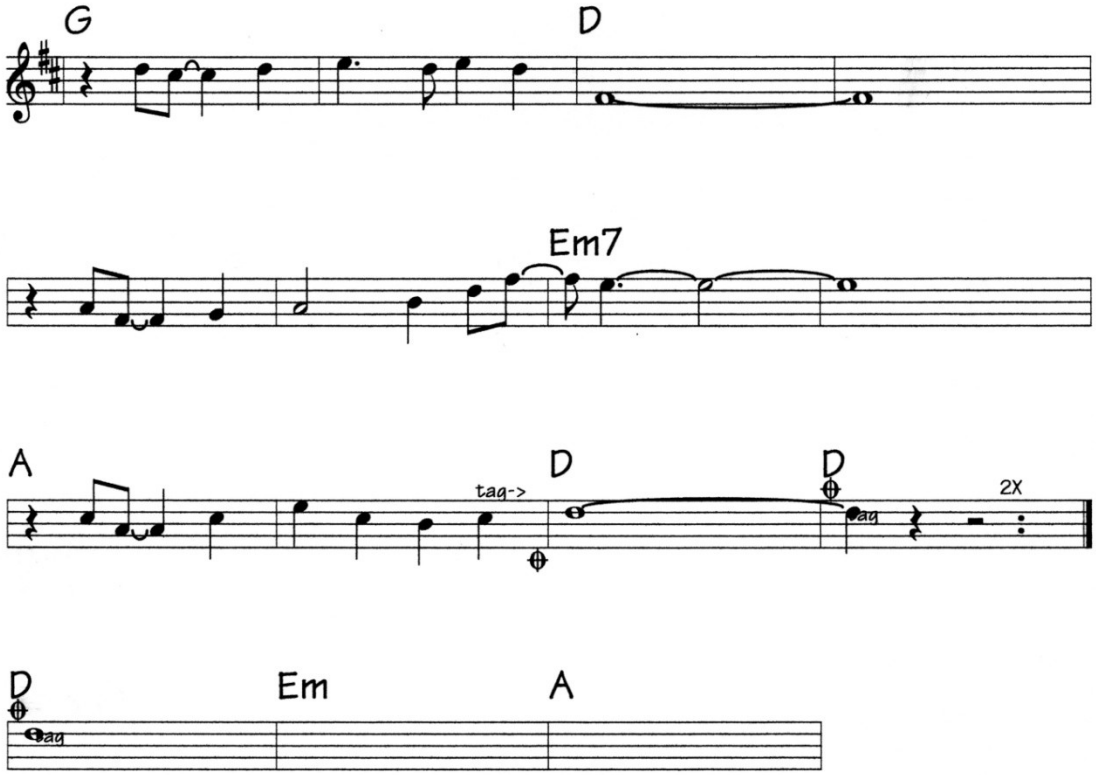


The pho - to-graphs and the mem - ories,
But when they came, I can't re - mem - ber,

© 1995



The Passing Years - Page 2

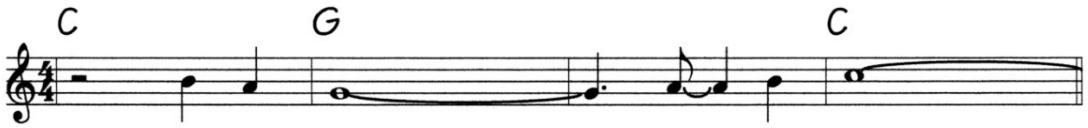


The Passing Years - Page 3

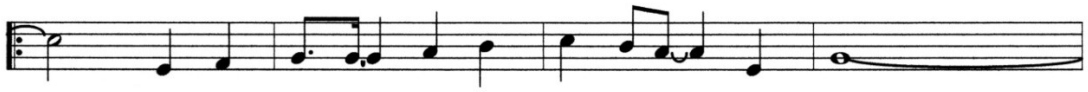
WHAT A DAY THAT WILL BE

By: Lyndell R. Martin

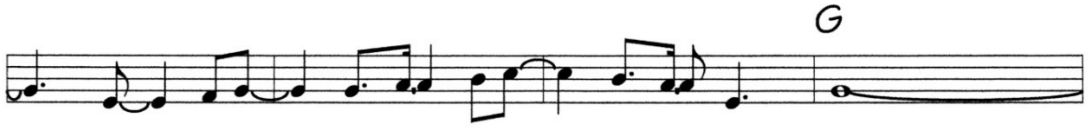
Tempo = 135



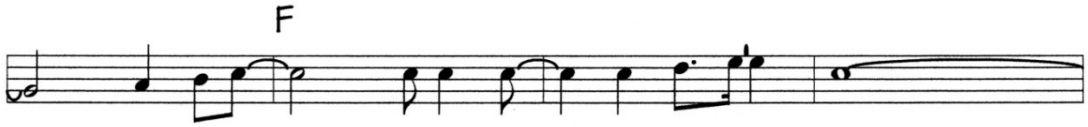
Intro: (Or start with chorus)



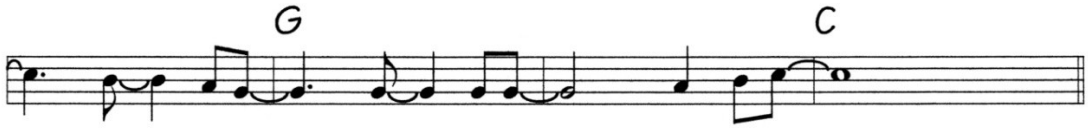
I am look -ing for the sign of His re - turn.
It will hap-pen in the twinkl - ing of an eye.



And the thought just makes my heart be - gin to yearn,
When King Je - sus comes to split the East - ern sky.

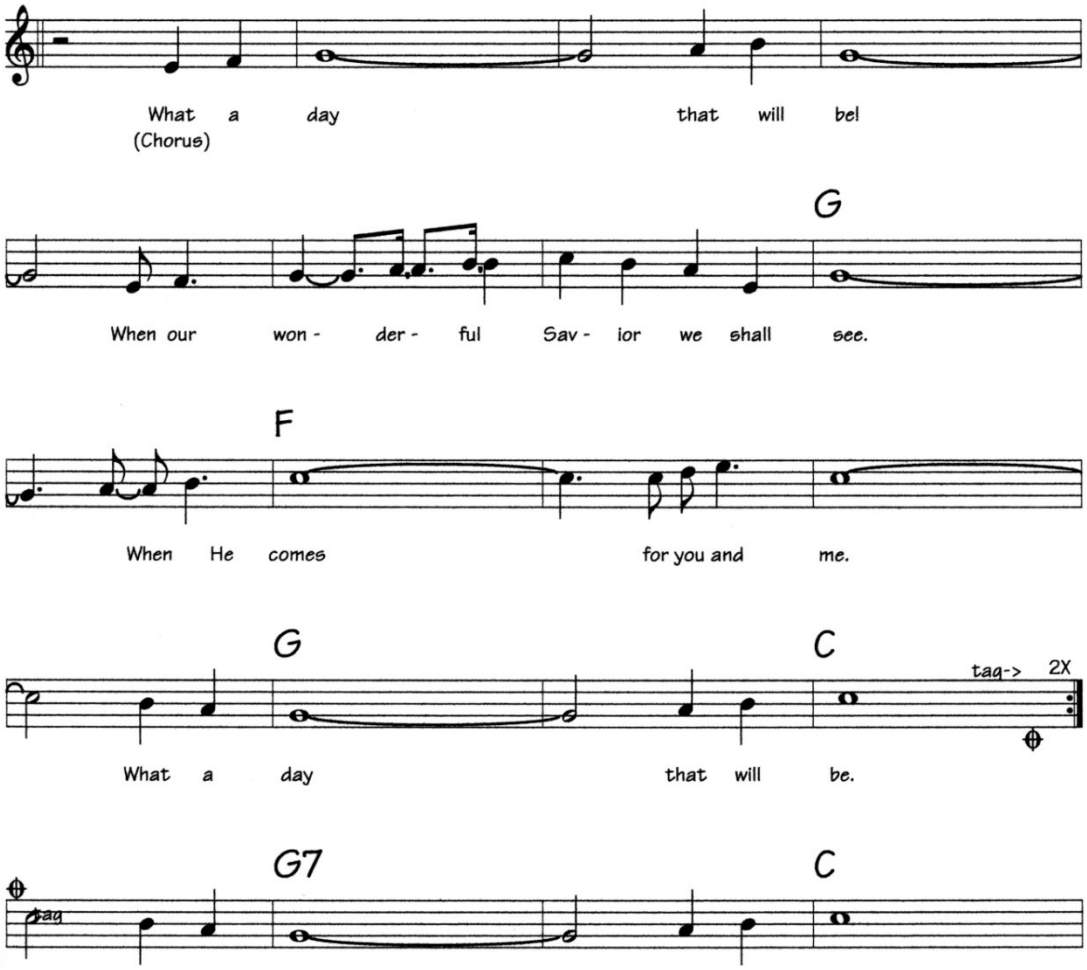


for the time when all men shall live as one,
We'll be go -ing where the soul shall nev - er die.



to the glo - ry of God's ho - ly Son.
Are you listen - ing? Will you hear the mid-night cry?

© 1991

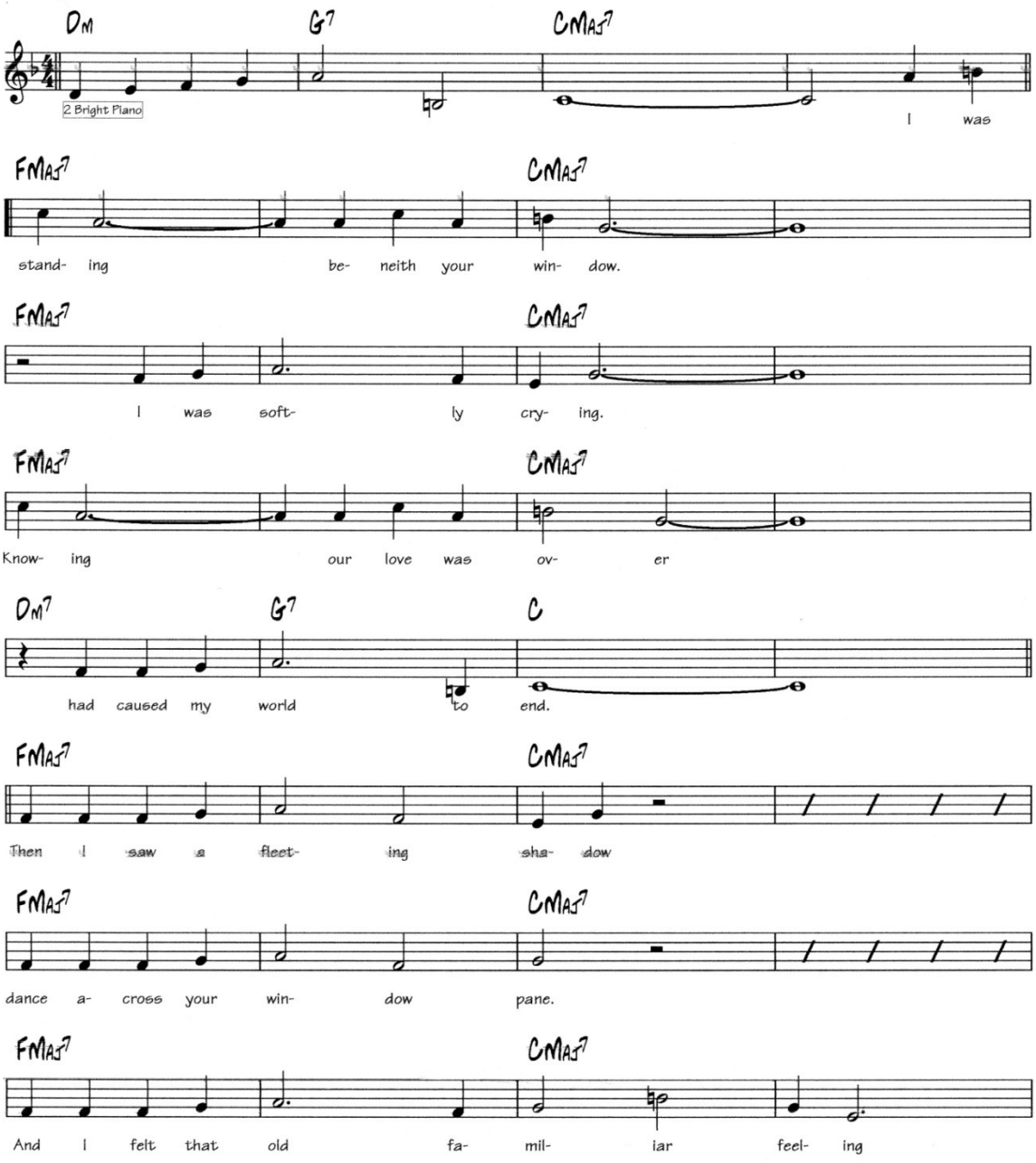


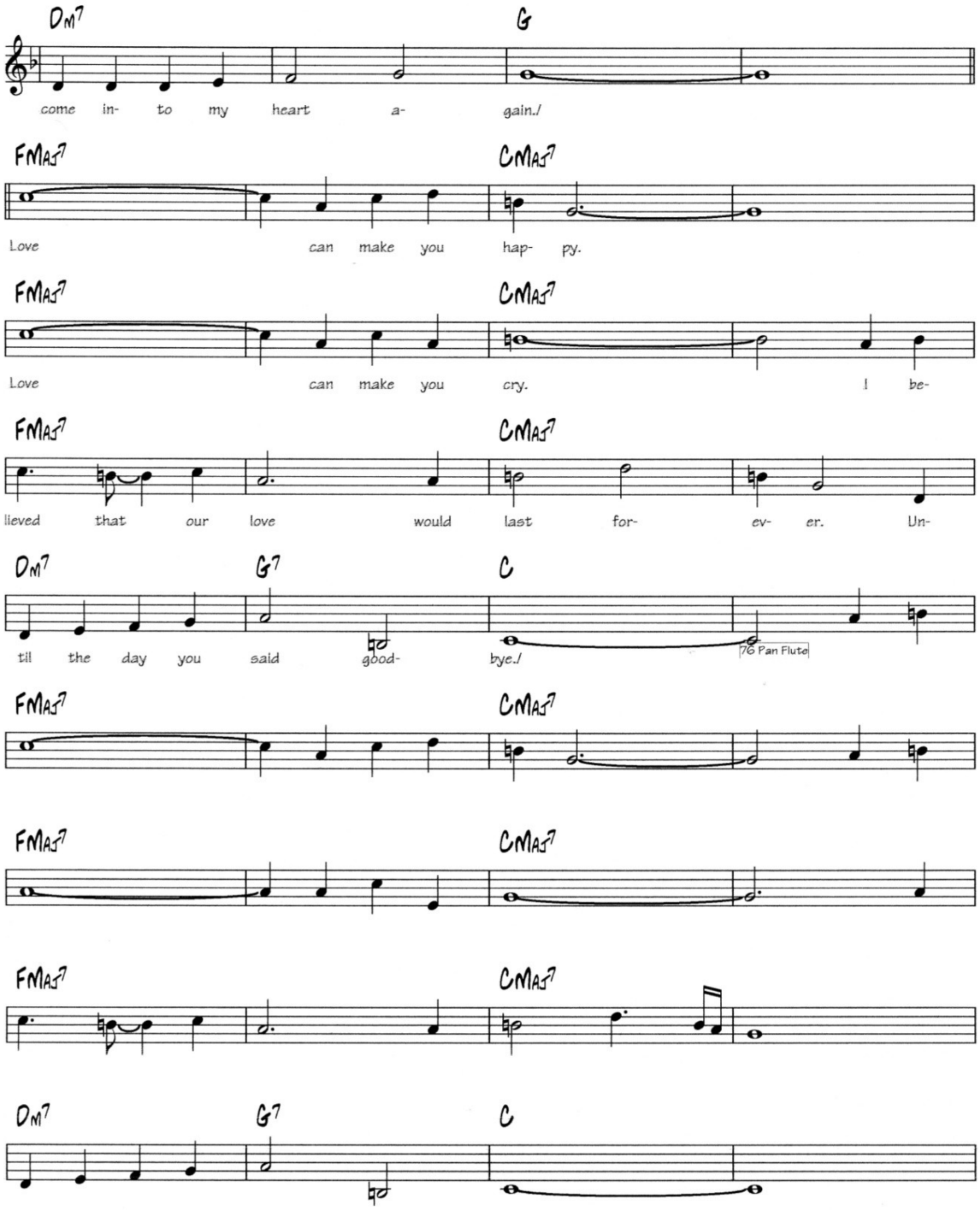
WHAT A DAY THAT WILL BE - Page 2

Love Can Last Forever

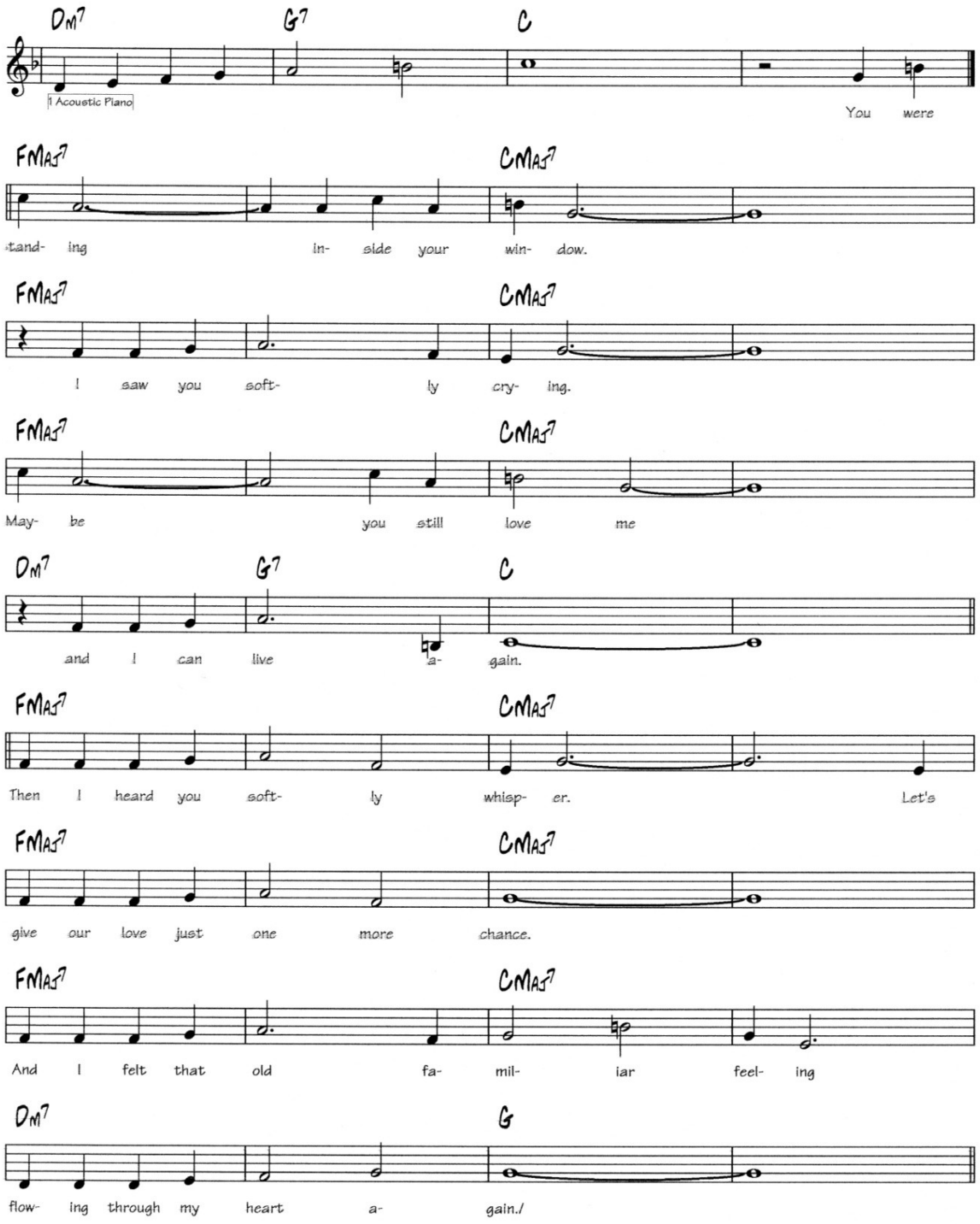
Tempo = 145

By: Lyndell R Martin
©2013 Words & Music

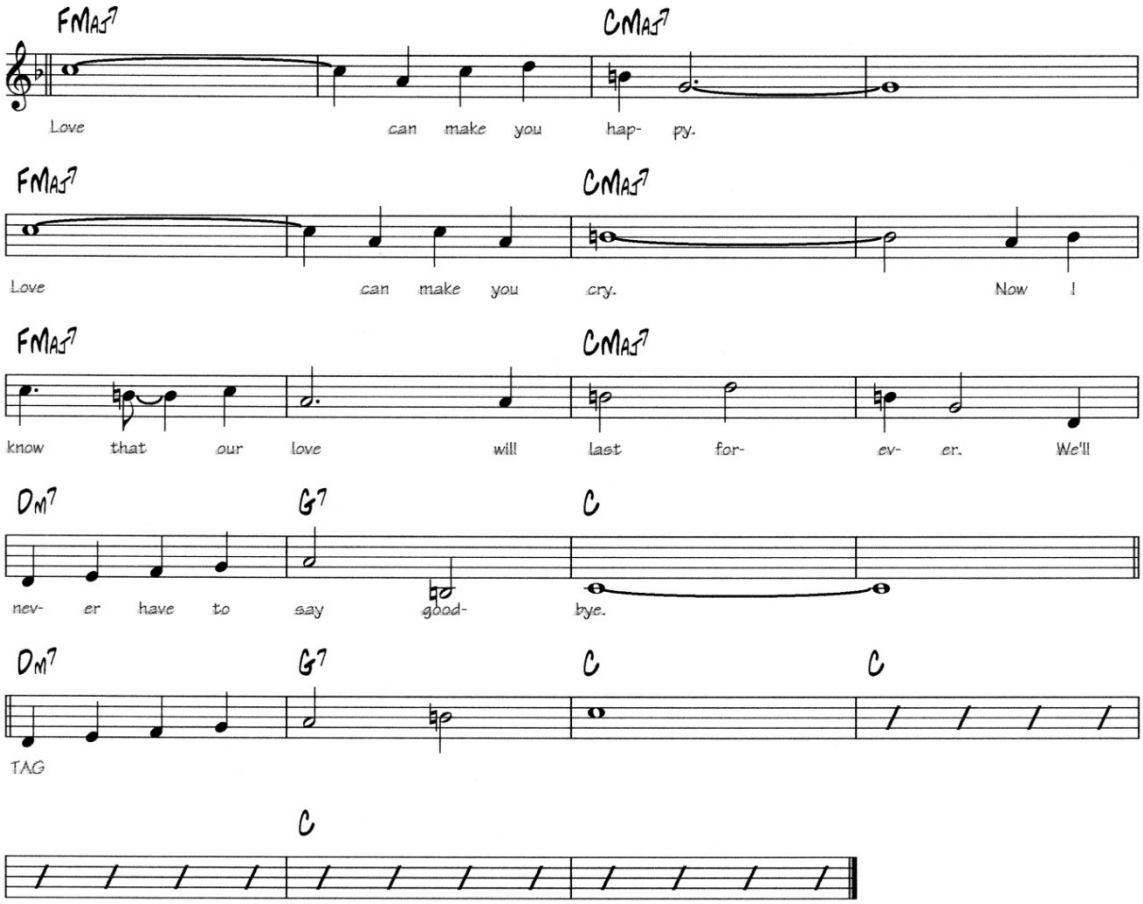




Love Can Last Forever - Page 2



Love Can Last Forever - Page 3


FMaj7
CMaj7
Love can make you hap- py.
FMaj7
CMaj7
Love can make you cry. Now I
FMaj7
CMaj7
know that our love will last for- ev- er. We'll
Dm7
G7
C
nev- er have to say good- bye.
Dm7
G7
C
C
TAG
C

SORRY GIRL

By: Lyndell R Martin
@2010 Words & Music

Tempo = 180

C F C

1b 1 Acoustic Piano 2b

G7 C

6a

(Boy) Sor- ry girl,
(Boy) Tell me girl,
(Boy) Oh, my love.

Am7

I ev- er met you. You look so
you're on- ly fool- in' Stay here with
Love is for- ev- er. If it's good-

Em7 Dm7

fine. Wish you were mine
me. We're meant to be.
by please tell me why.

G7 C

23a

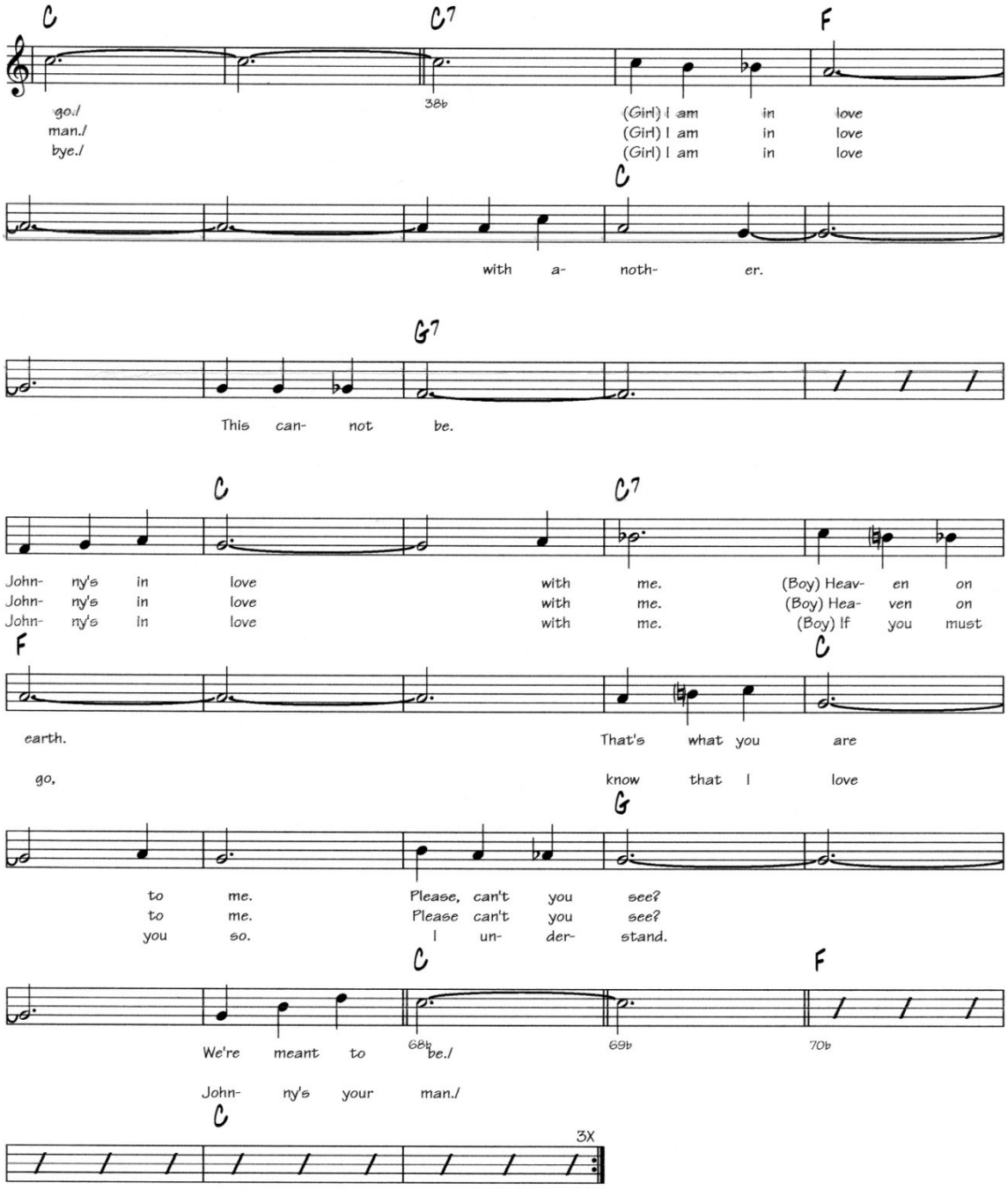
(Girl) Sor- ry boy,
(Girl) No, I must go.
(Girl) I love you to.

Am7

if I've up- set you.
But I hate to leave you.
Now and for- ev- er

G7

But you must know. I have to
Please un- der- stand. John- ny's my
Please don't you cry. Just kiss me good-

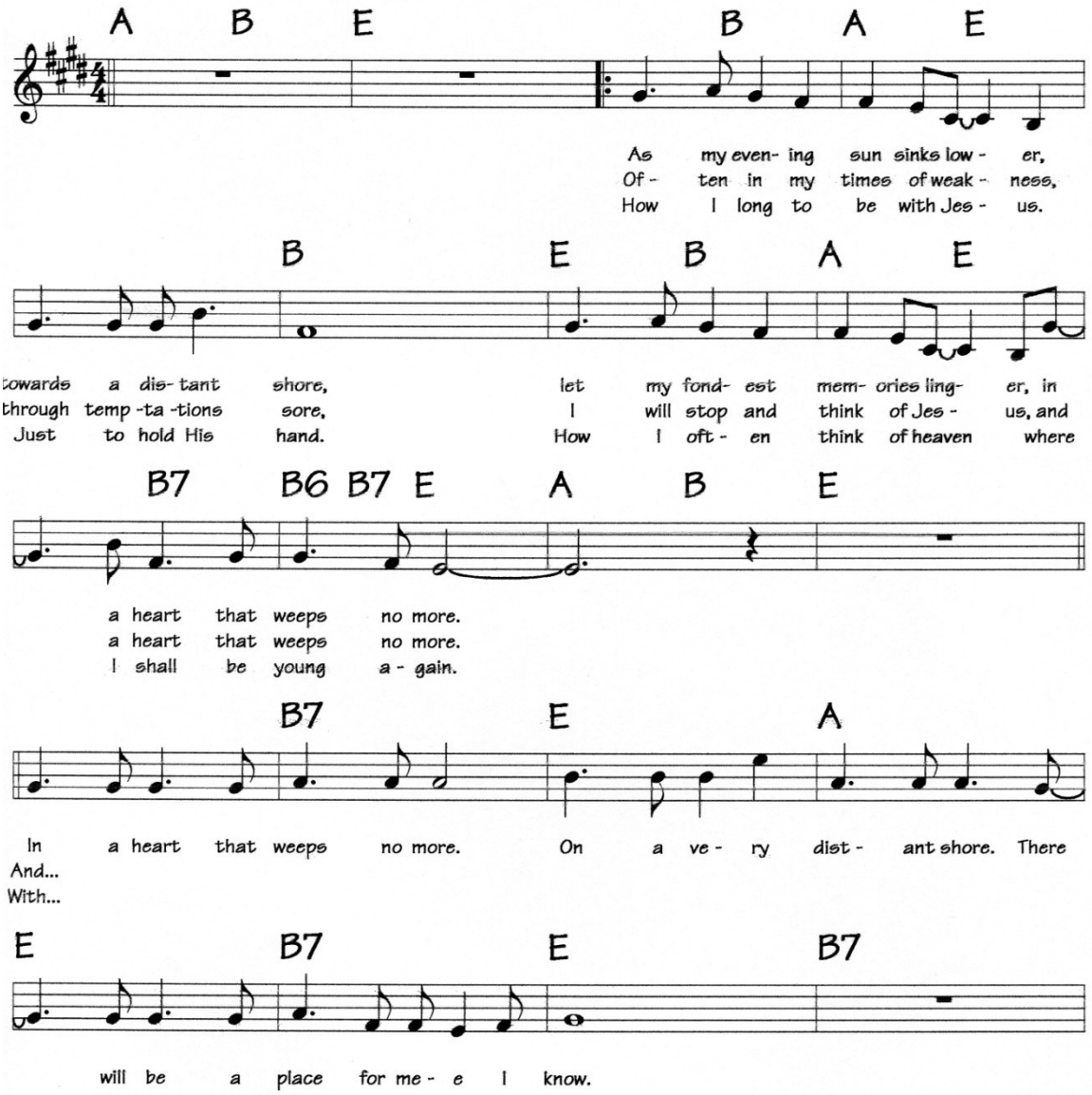


SORRY GIRL - Page 2

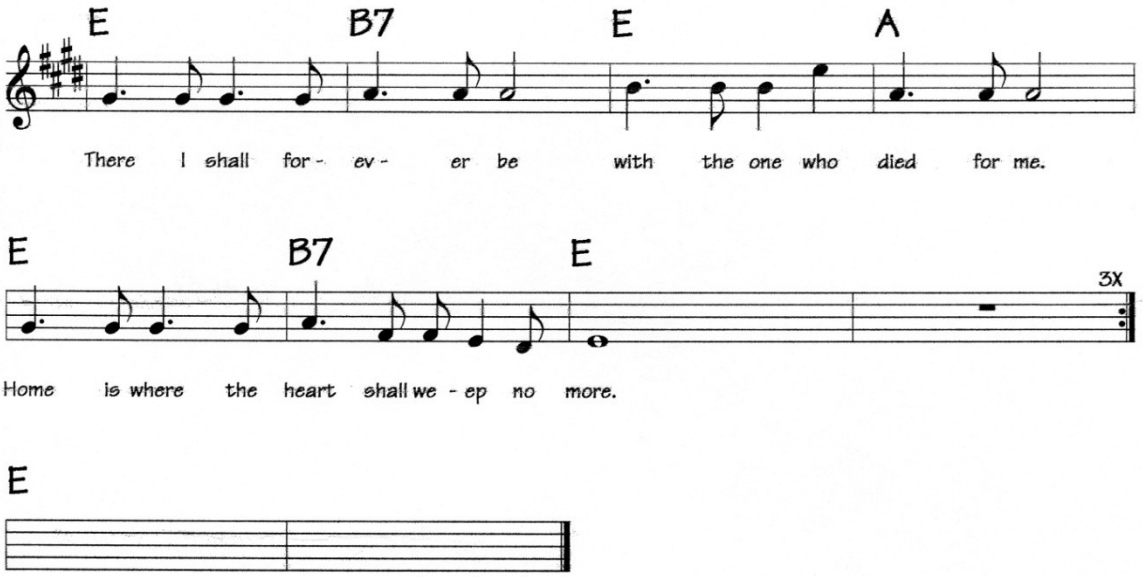
Where The Heart Shall Weep No More

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1989

Tempo = 95



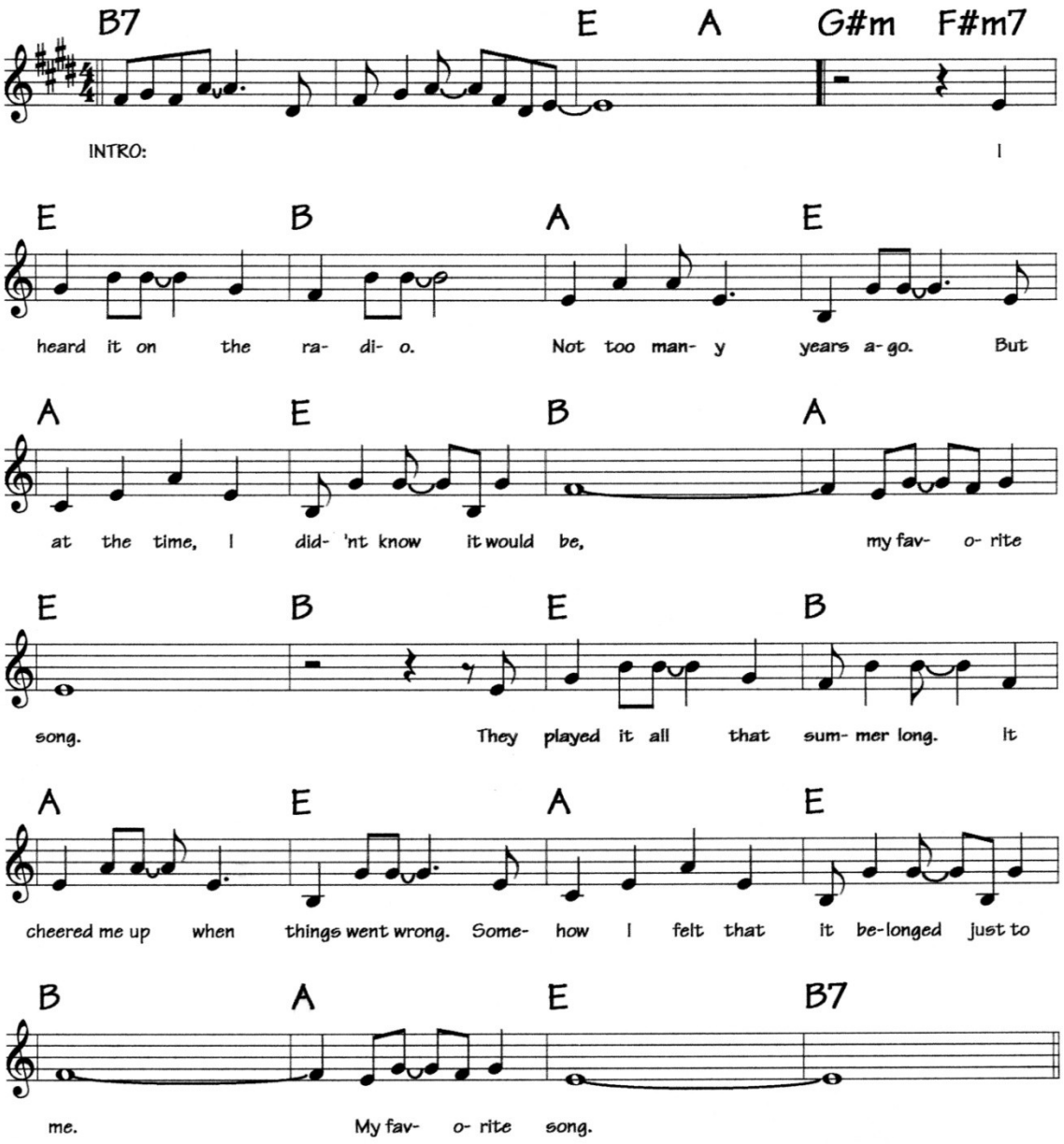
© 1989

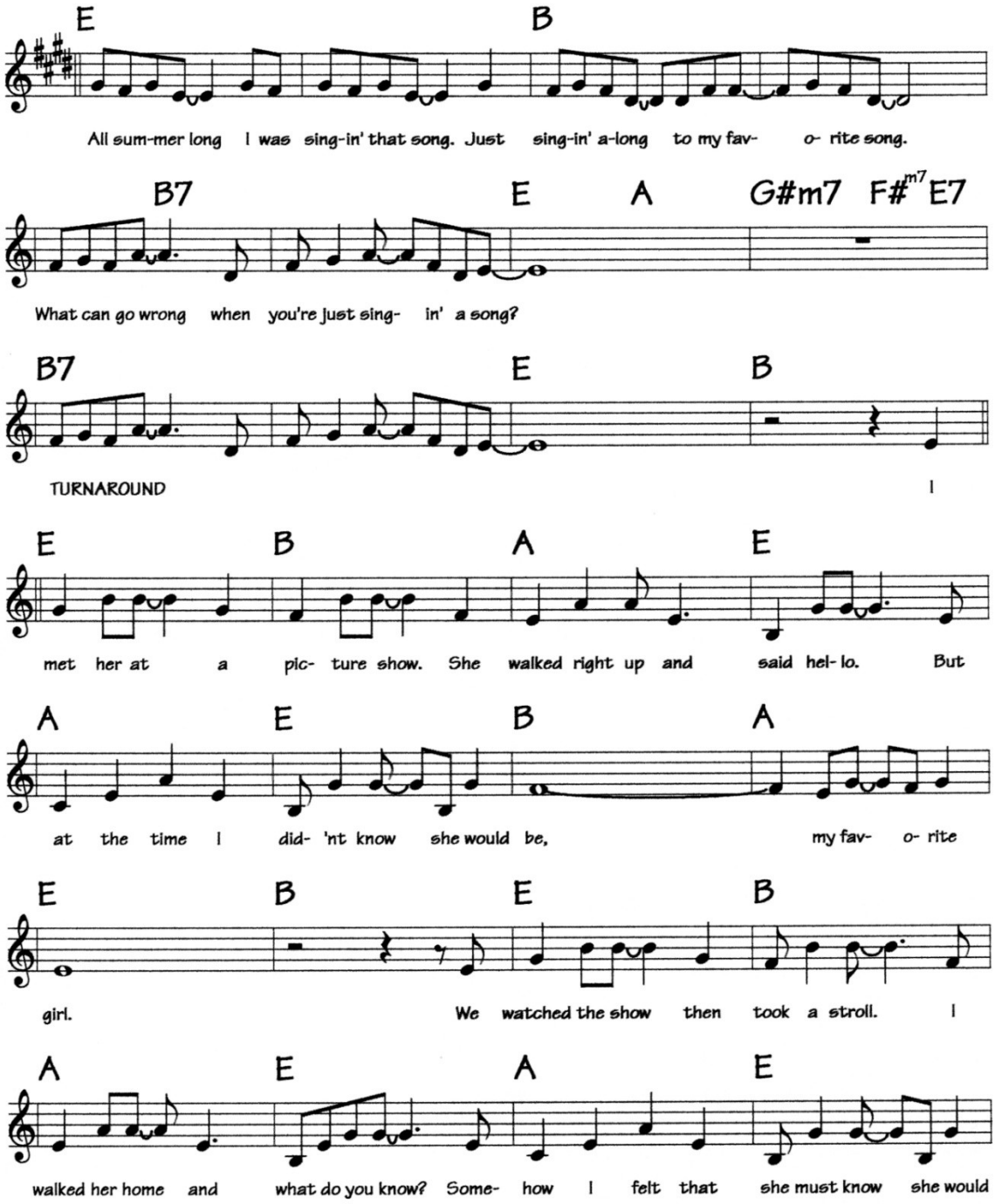

E B7 E A
There I shall for - ev - er be with the one who died for me.
E B7 E
3X
Home is where the heart shall we - ep no more.
E

OUR FAVORITE SONG

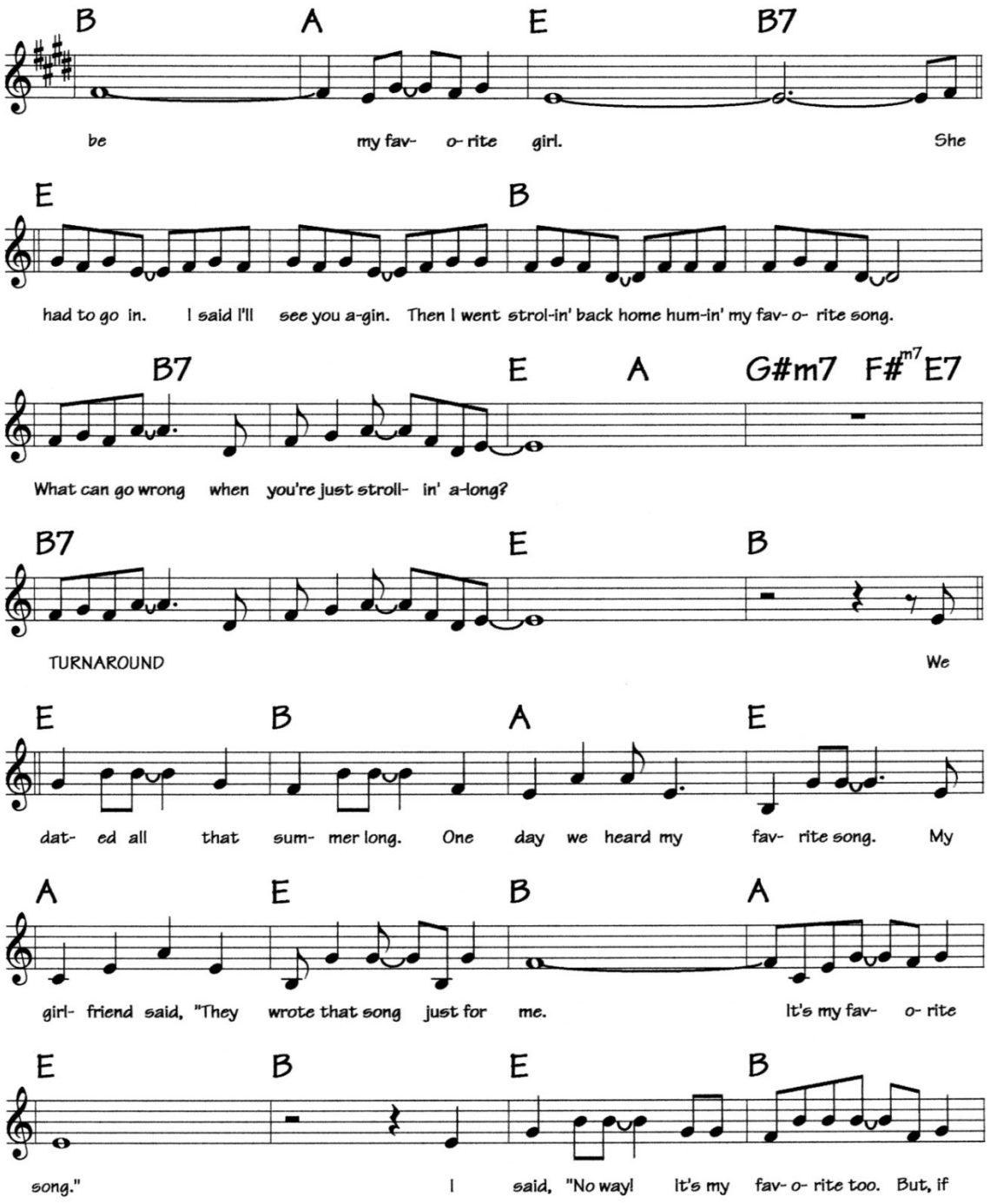
© 2011 Lyndell R. Martin
Tempo = 125

Words & Music by:
Lyndell R. Martin

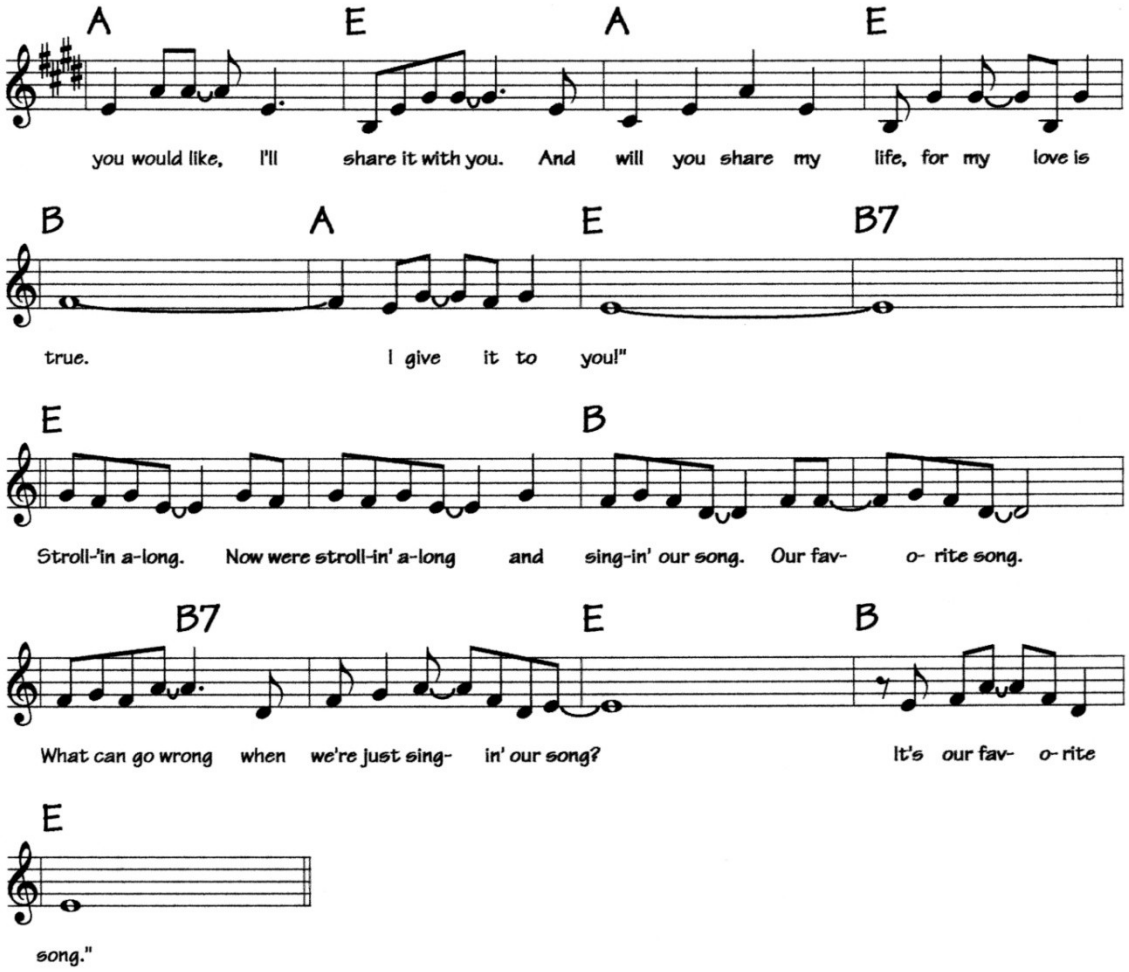




OUR FAVORITE SONG - Page 2



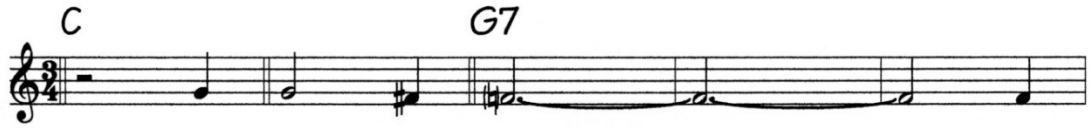
OUR FAVORITE SONG - Page 3


A E A E
you would like, I'll share it with you. And will you share my life, for my love is
B A E B7
true. I give it to you!"
E B
Stroll-'in a-long. Now were stroll-in' a-long and sing-in' our song. Our fav- o- rite song.
B7 E B
What can go wrong when we're just sing- in' our song? It's our fav- o- rite
E
song."

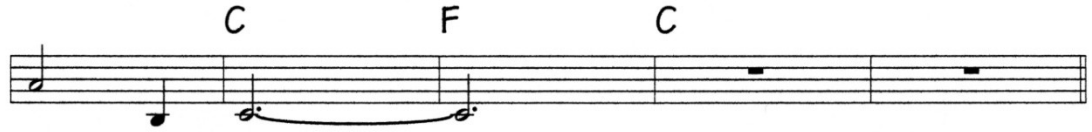
Pray for Me (Oh, For the Love of Jesus)

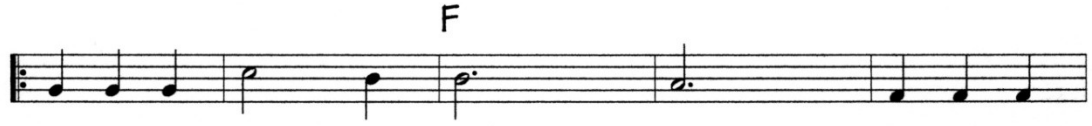
By: Lyndell R. Martin

Tempo = 145

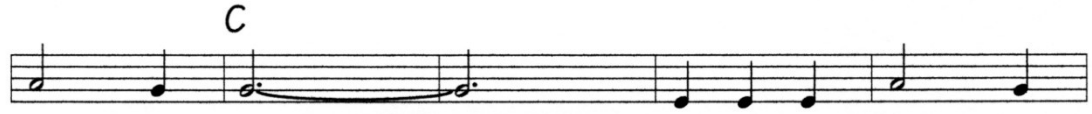


Intro:

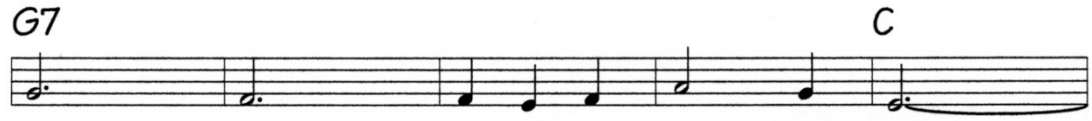




Oh, for the love of Je - sus, to live in
Oh, that the light with - in us would shine on

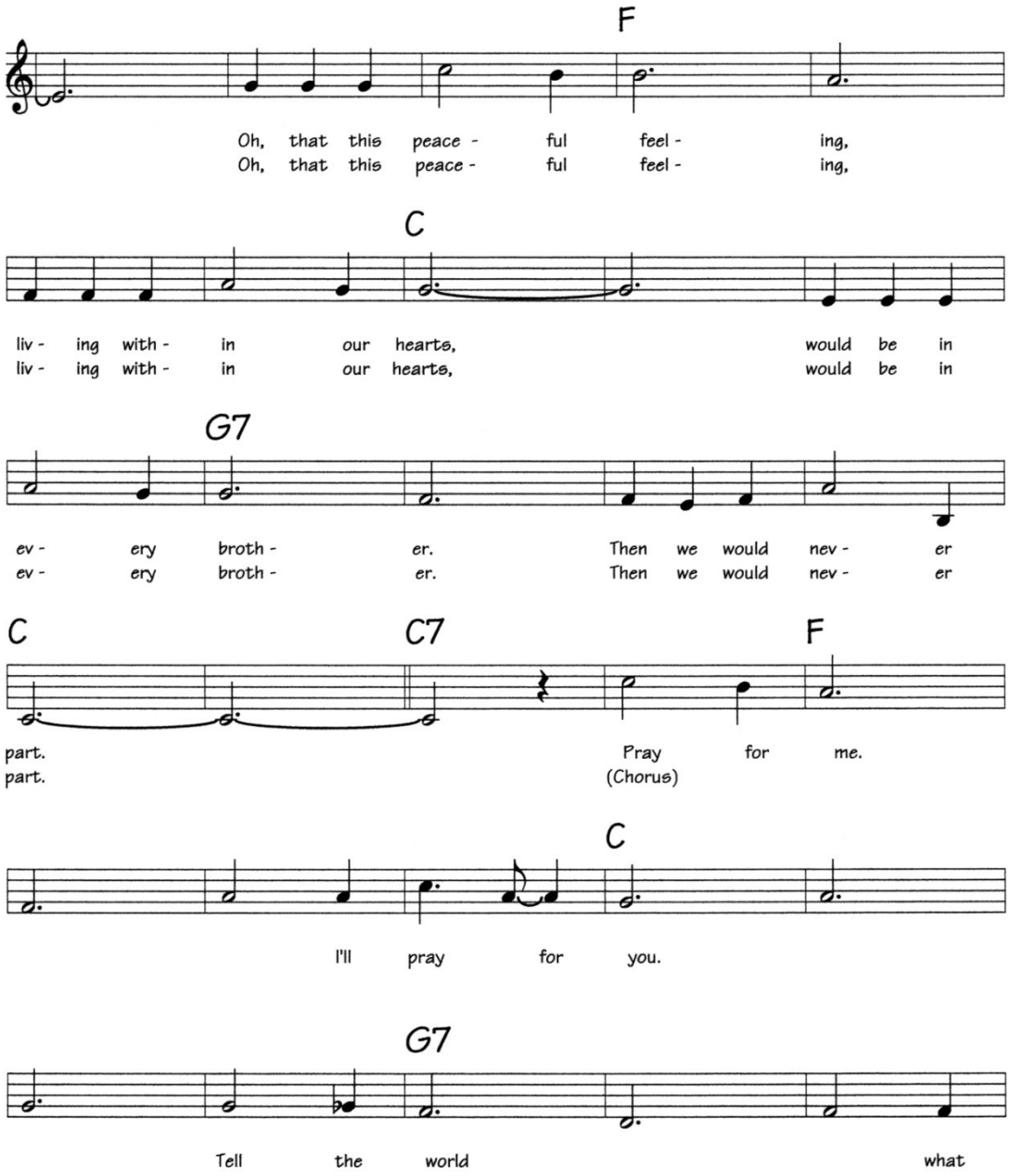


ev - ery soul. There could be noth - ing
ev - ery soul. We could do noth - ing

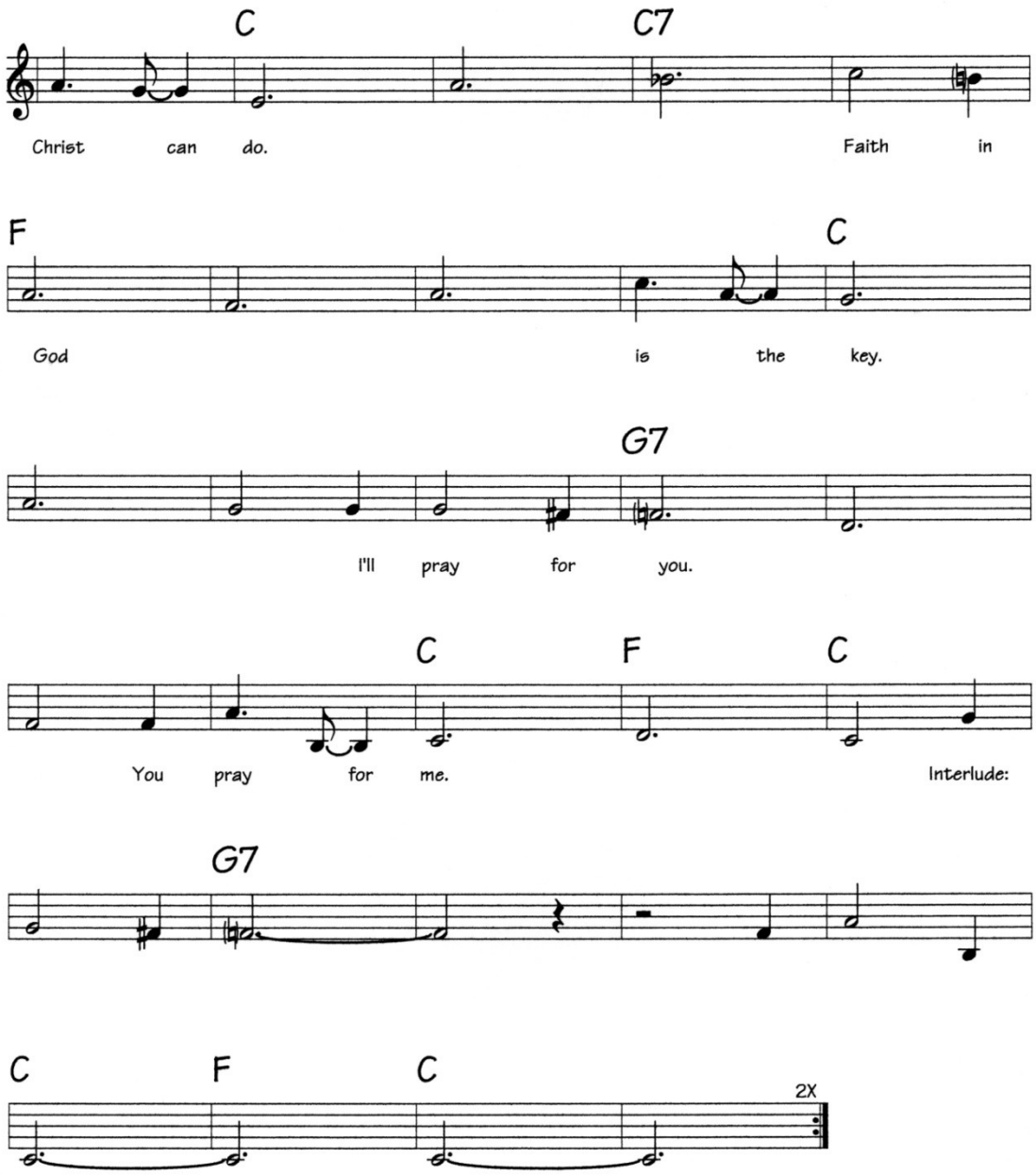


sweet - er than for His love to grow.
great - er than let our love light glow.

© 1994



Pray for Me (Oh, For the Love of Jesus) - Page 2

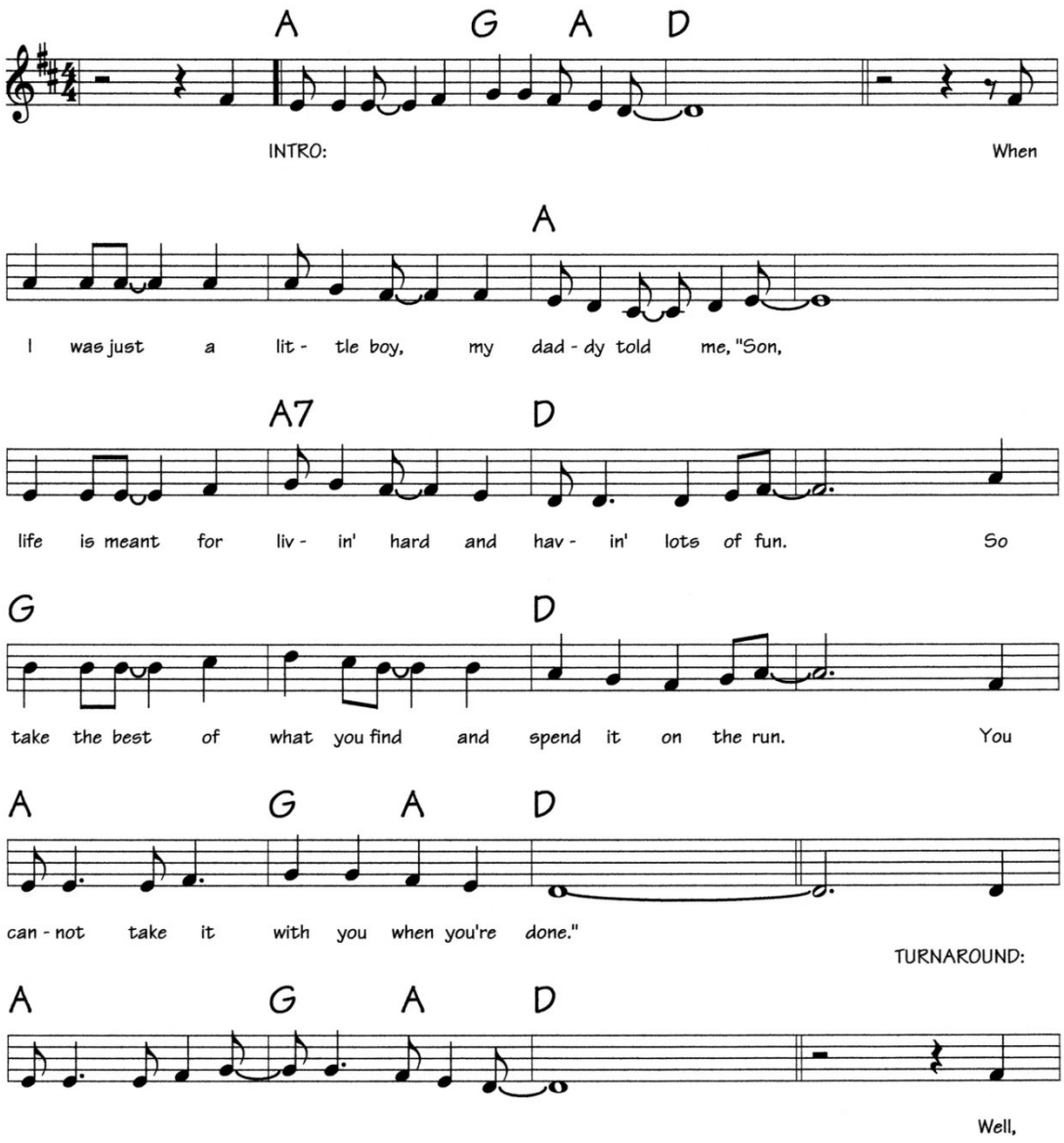


Pray for Me (Oh, For the Love of Jesus) - Page 3

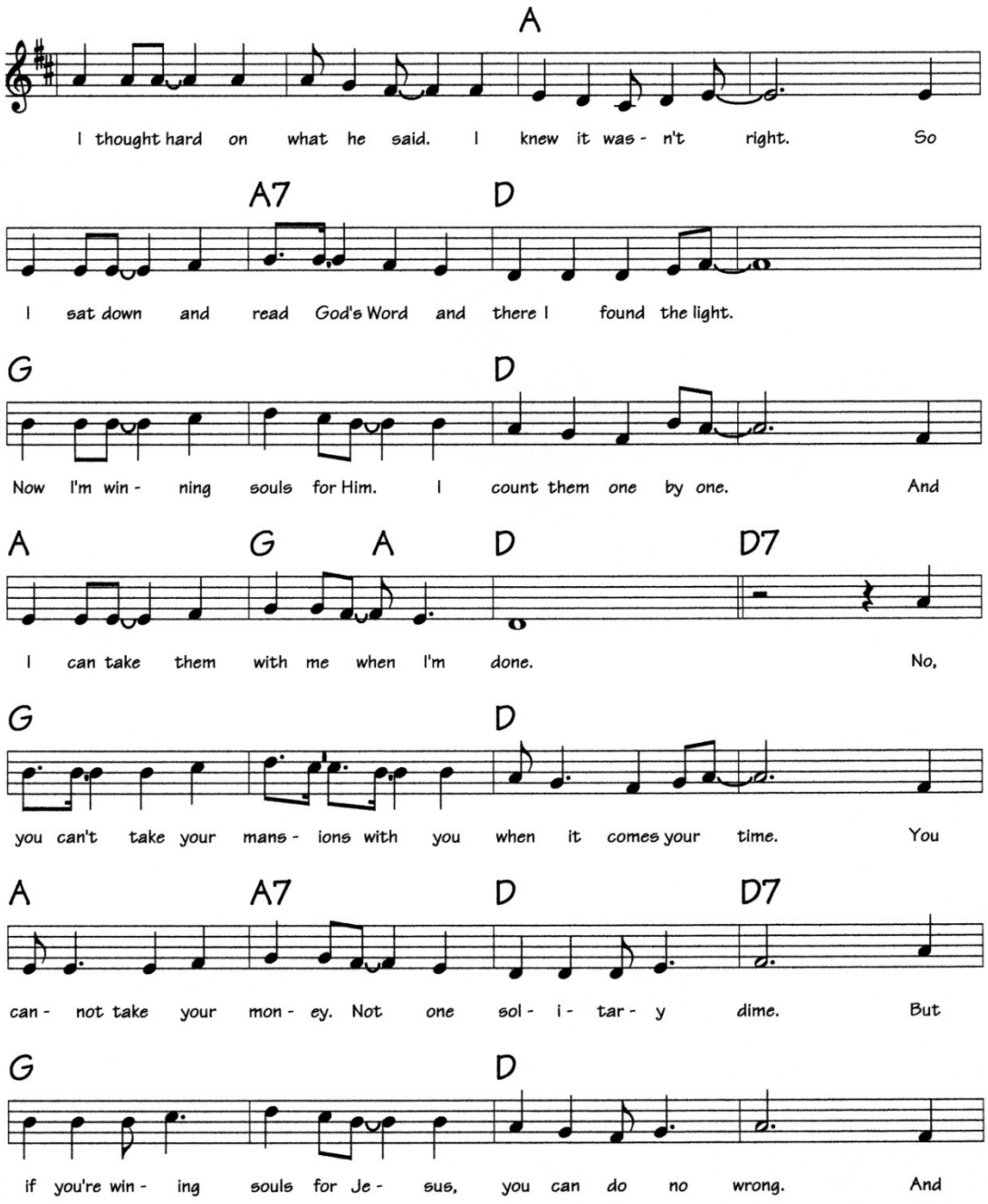
You Can't Take It With You

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1988

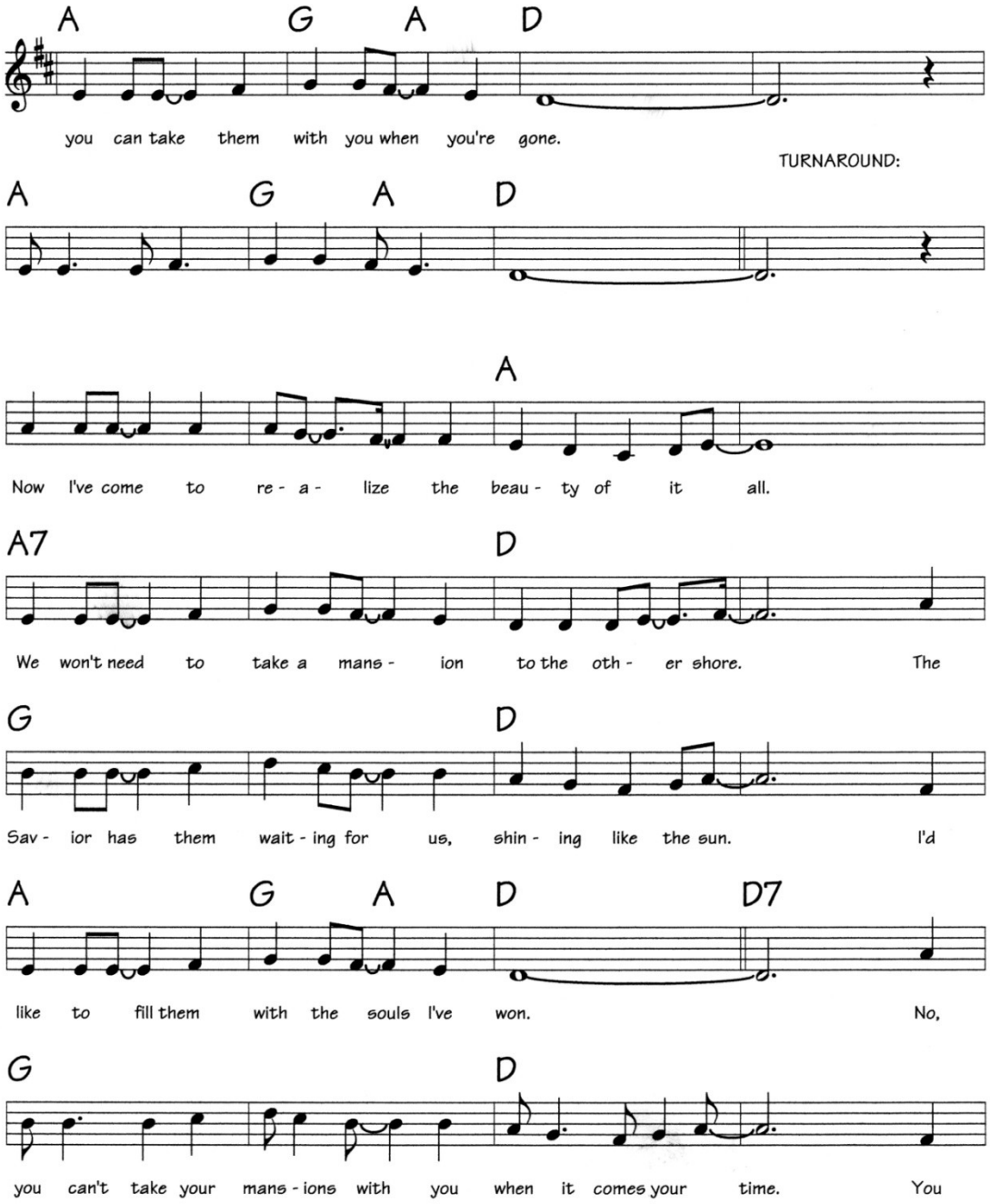
Tempo = 135



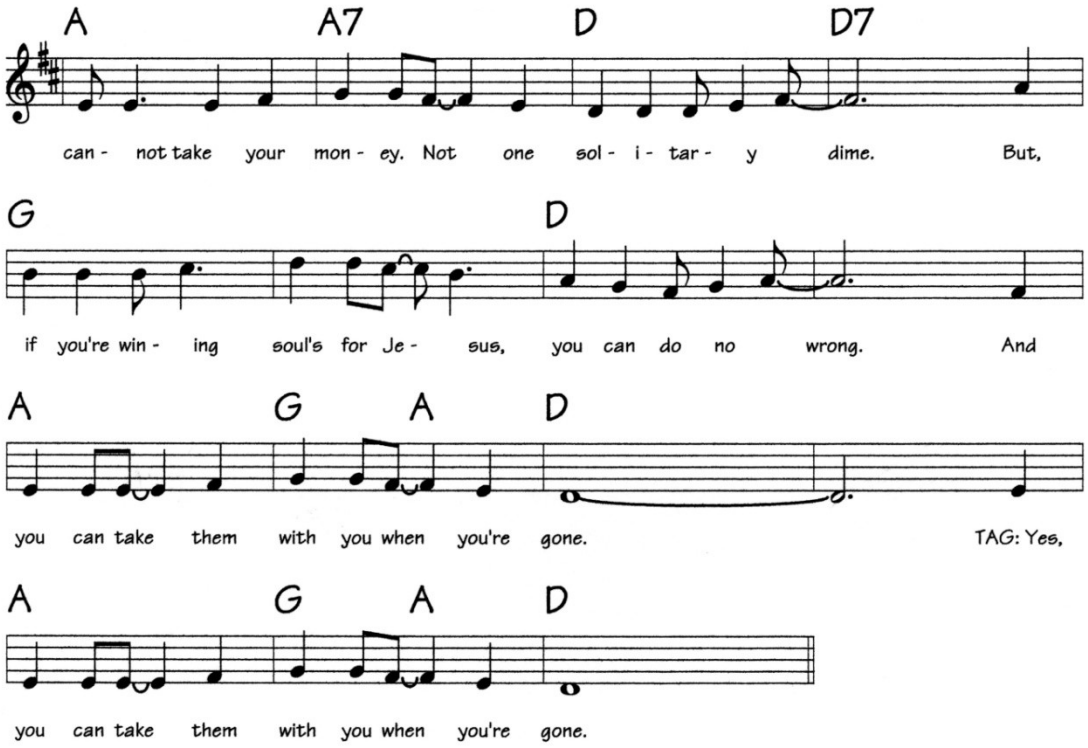
© 1988



You Can't Take It With You - Page 2



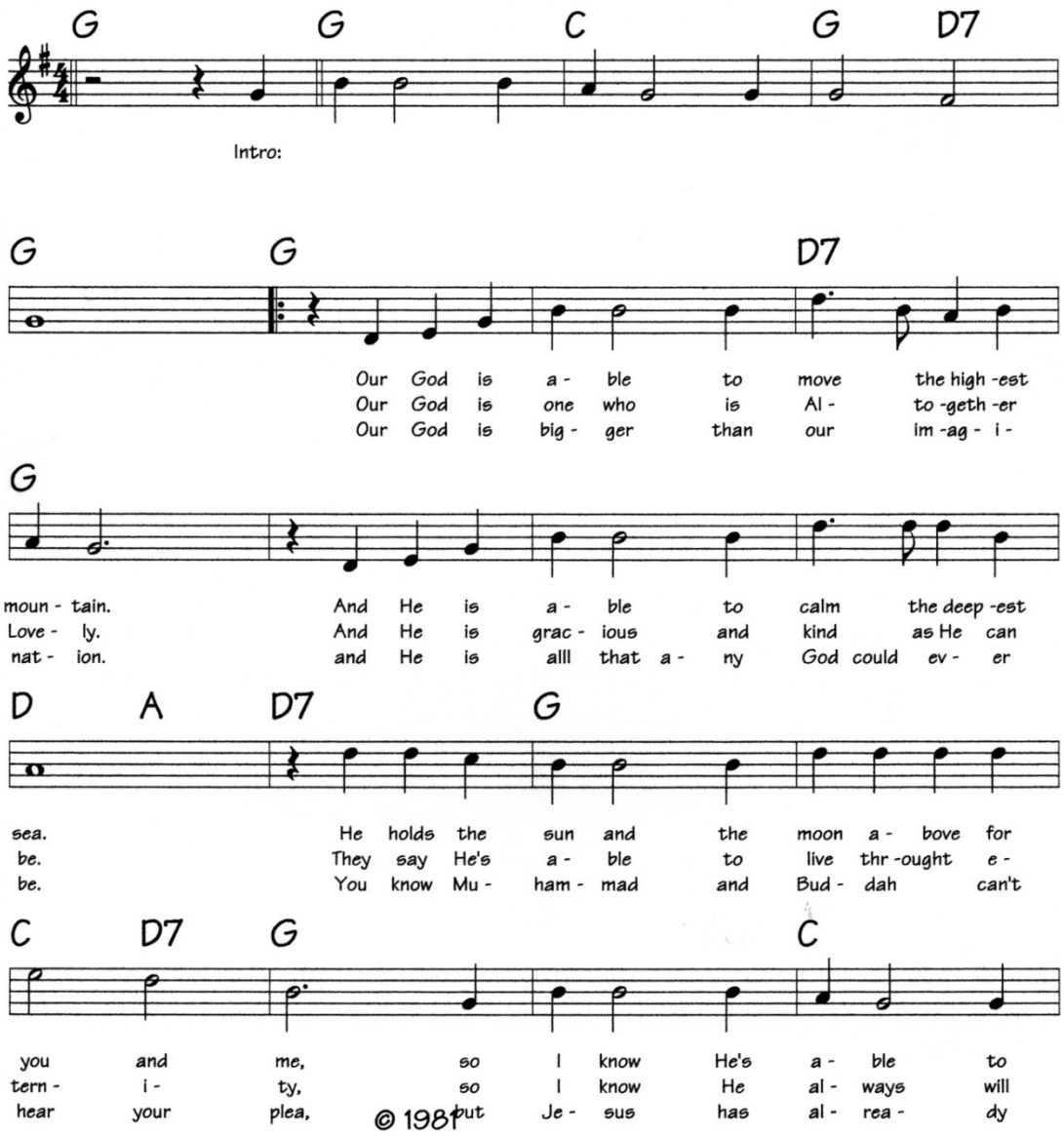
You Can't Take It With You - Page 3


A A7 D D7
can - not take your mon - ey. Not one sol - i - tar - y dime. But,
G D
if you're win - ing soul's for Je - sus, you can do no wrong. And
A G A D
you can take them with you when you're gone. TAG: Yes,
A G A D
you can take them with you when you're gone.

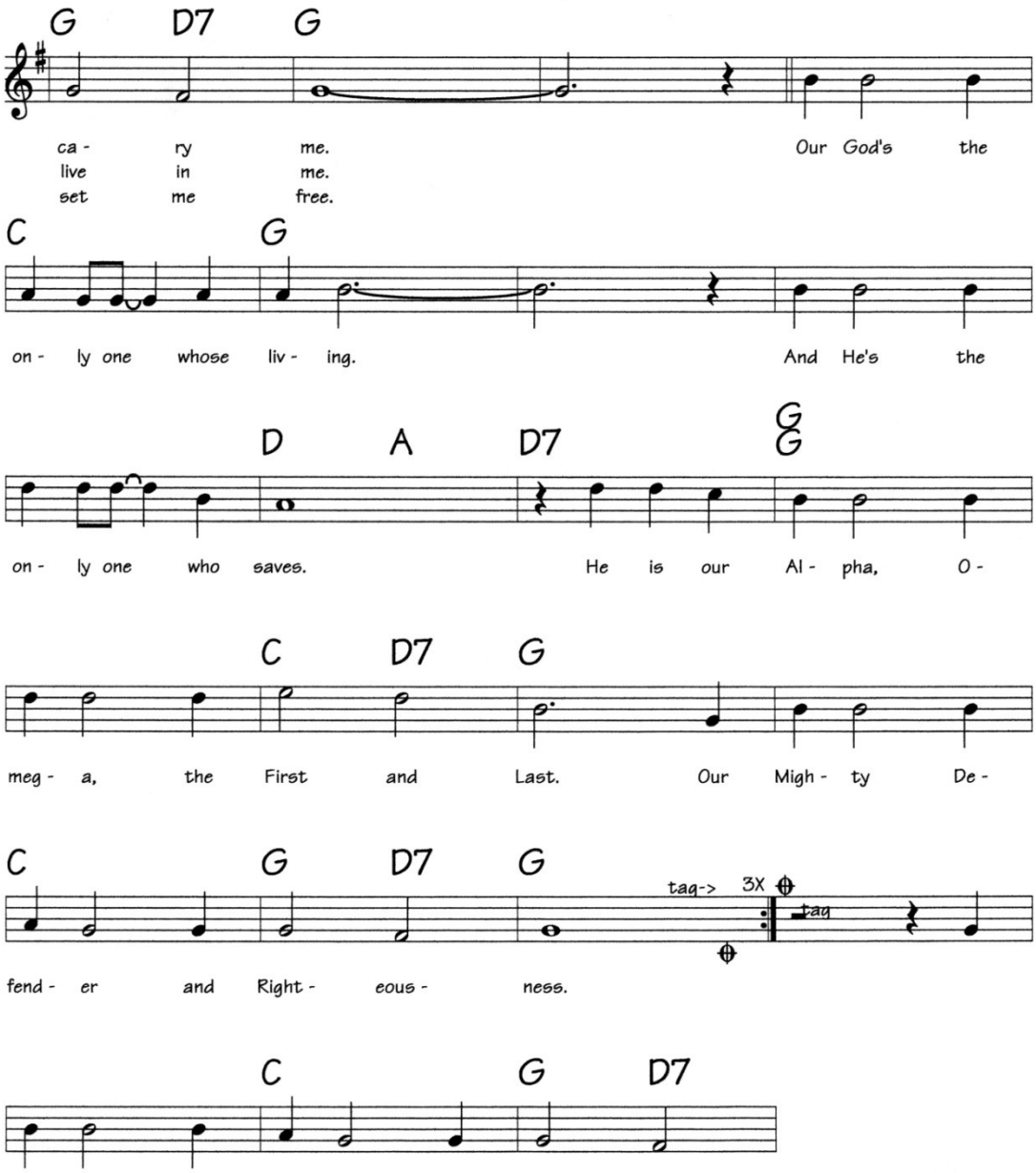
Our God Is Able

By: Lyndell R. Martin

Tempo = 160



© 1981

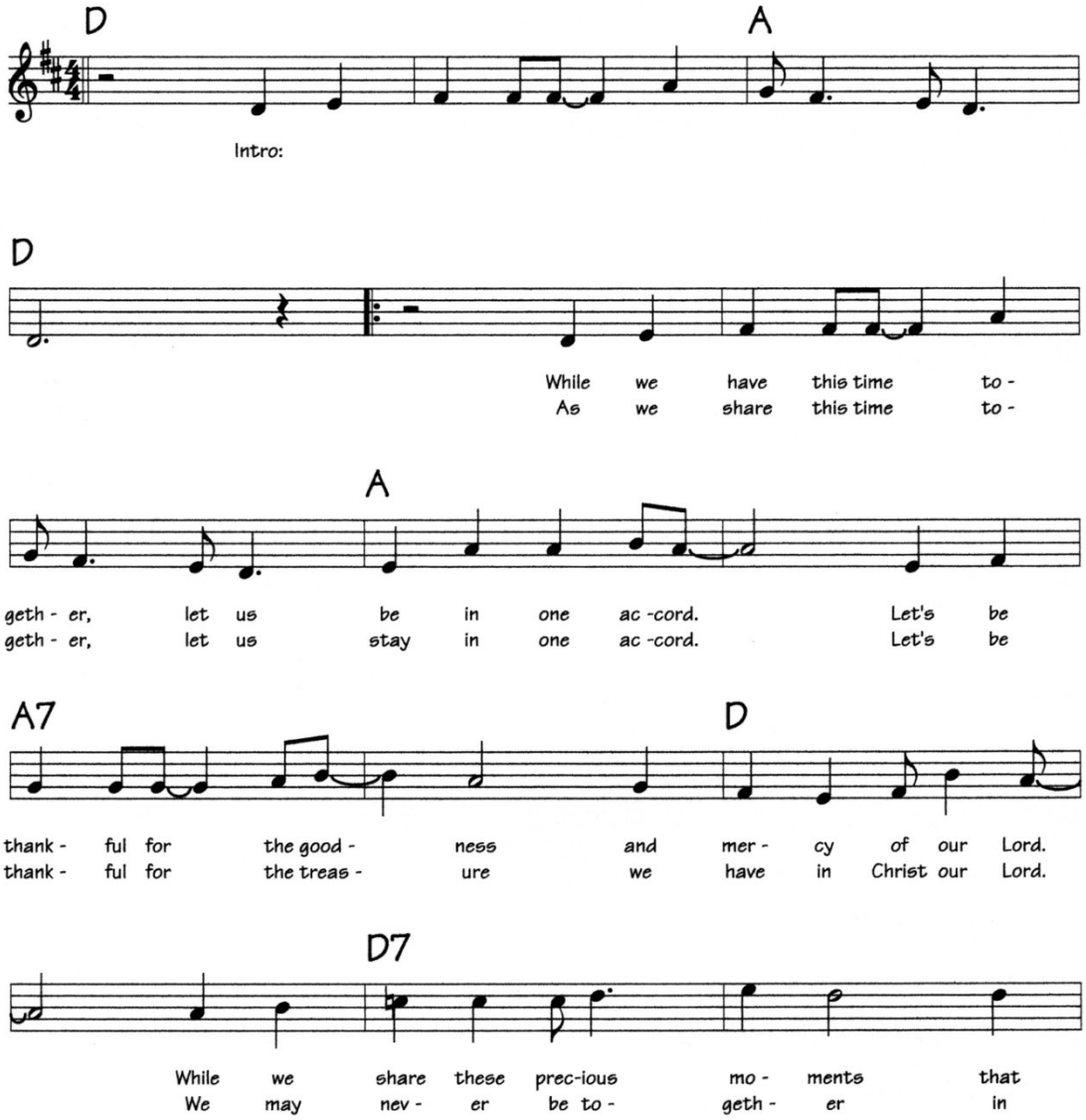


Our God Is Able - Page 2

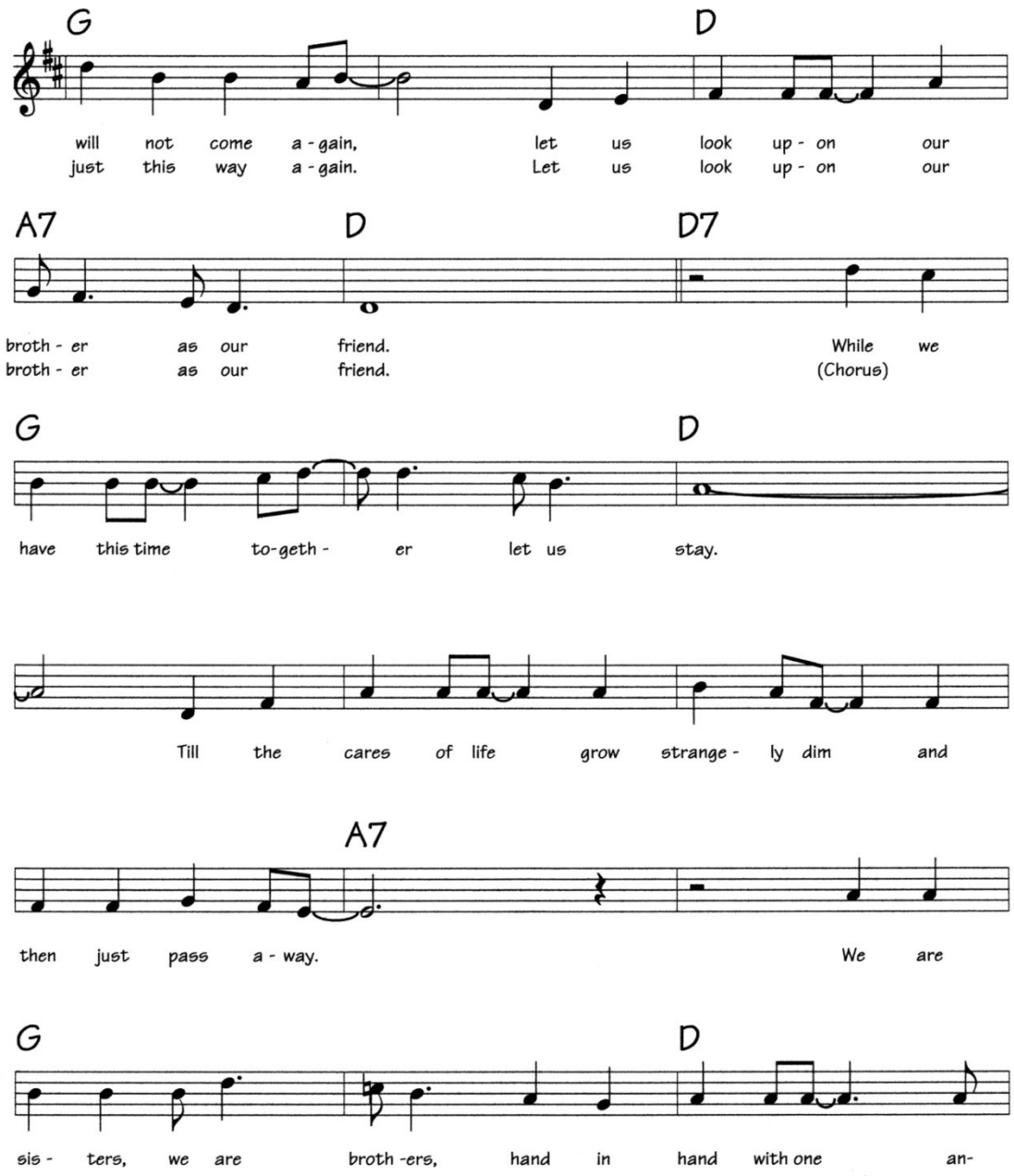
While We Have This Time Together

By: Lyndell R. Martin

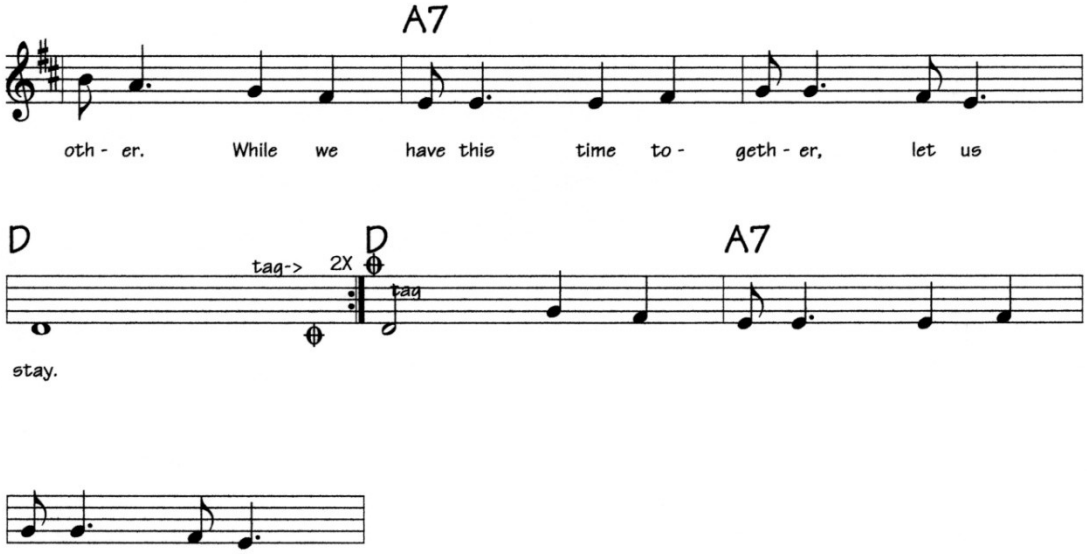
Tempo = 130



© 1994



While We Have This Time Together - Page 2

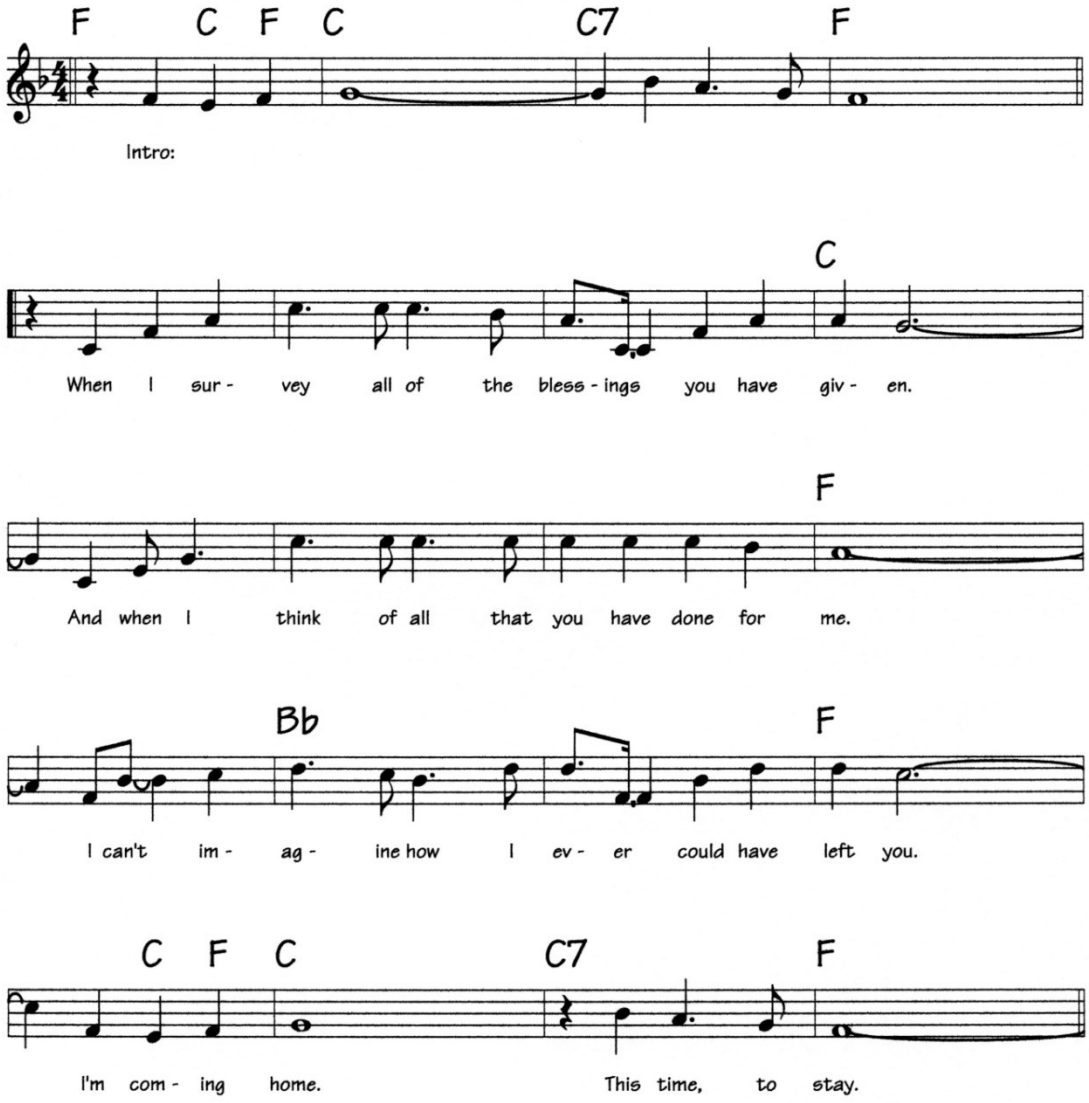


While We Have This Time Together - Page 3

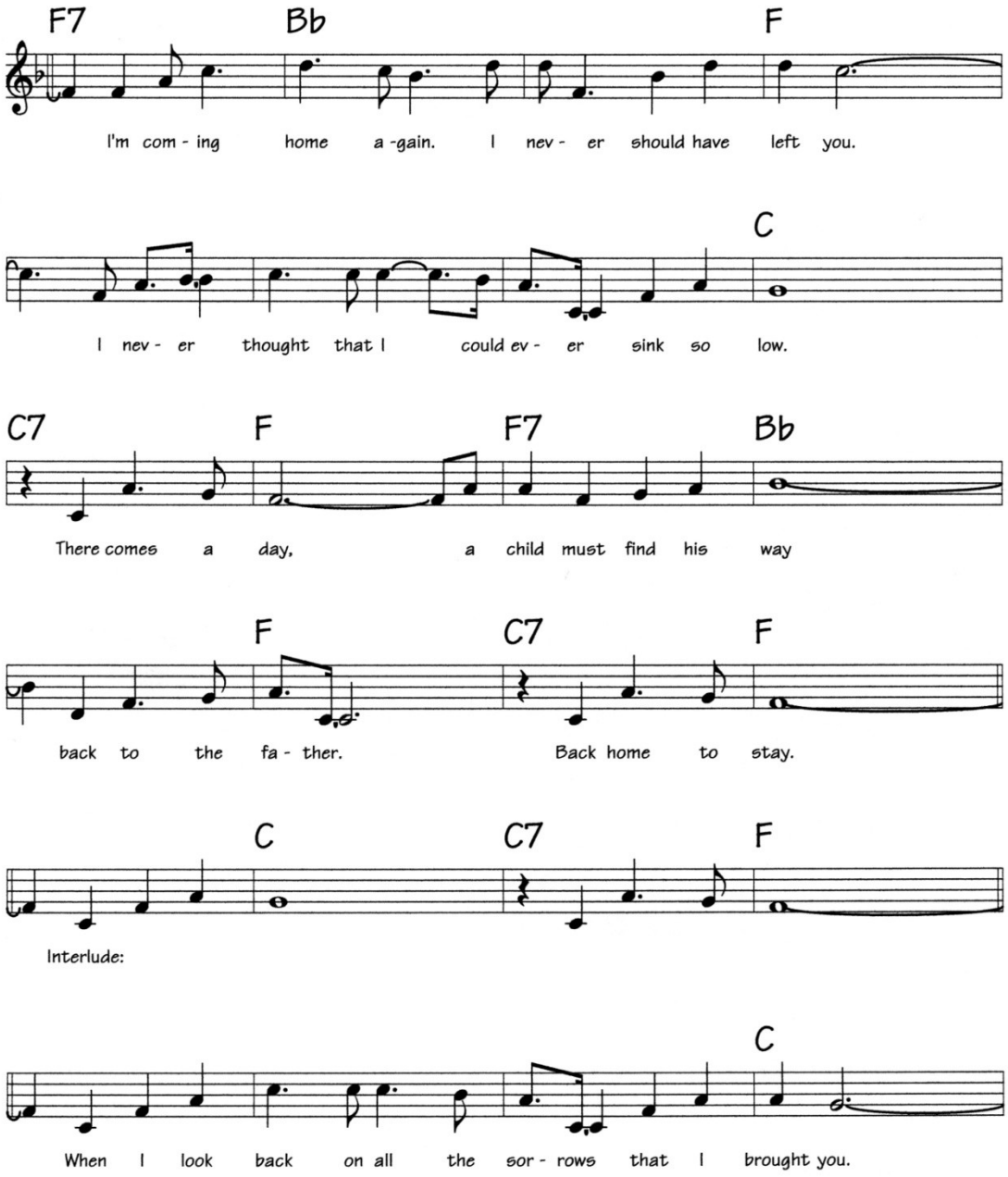
I'm Coming Home

By: Lyndell R. Martin

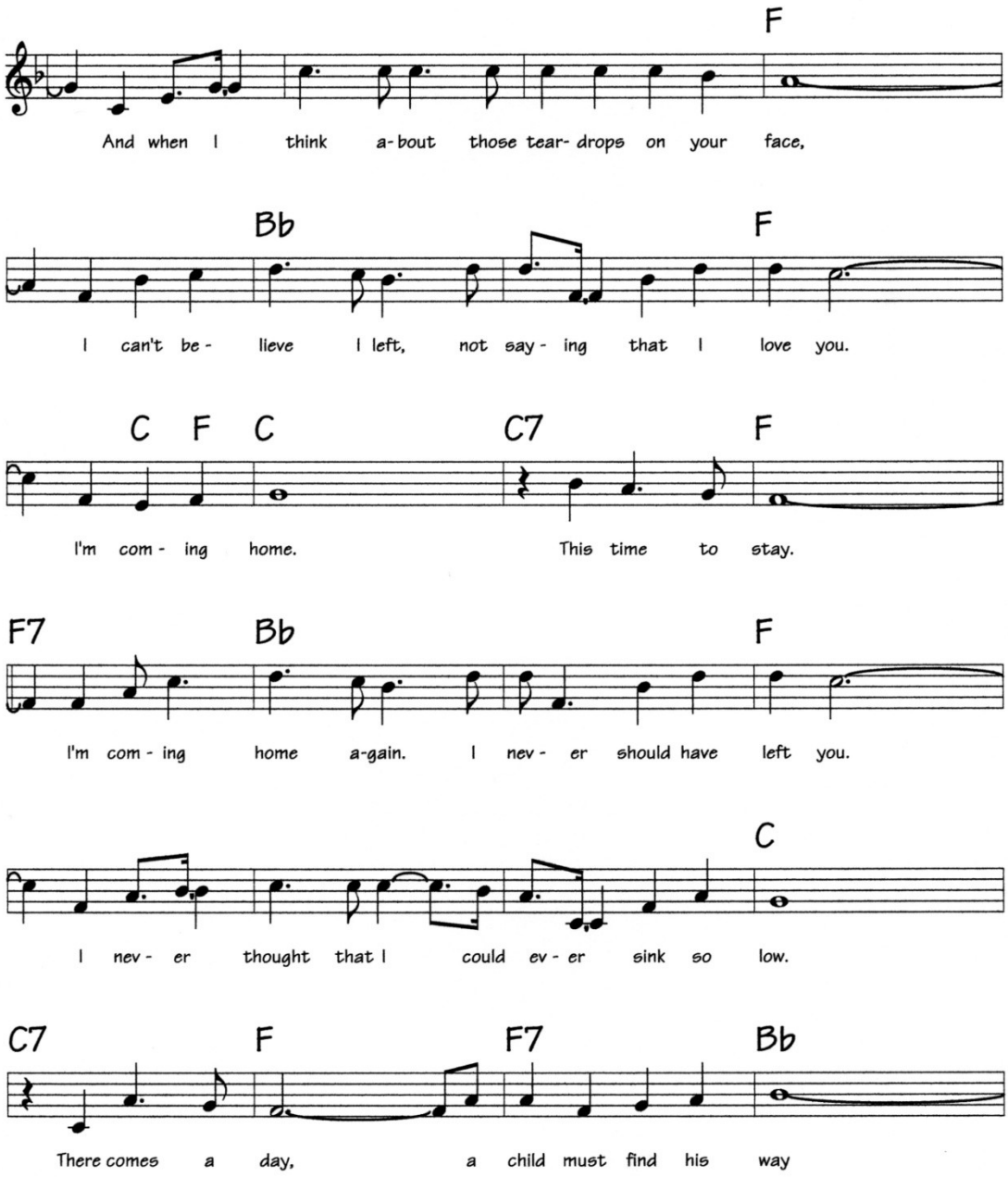
Tempo = 110

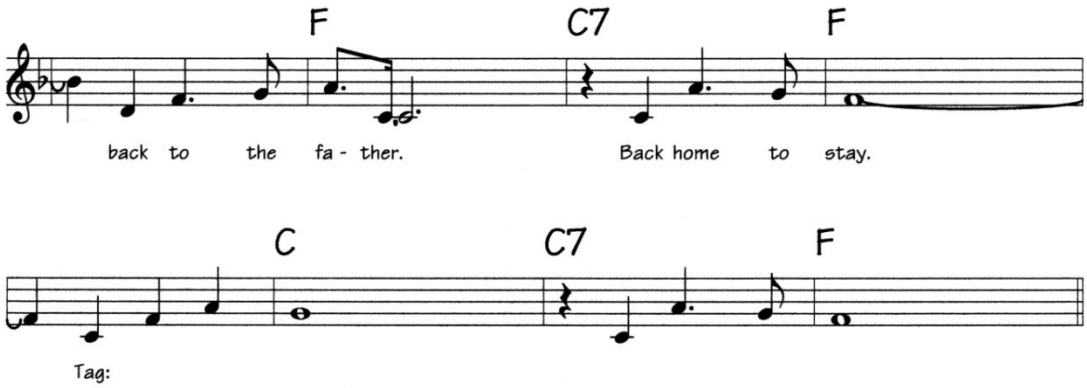


© 1993



I'm Coming Home - Page 2

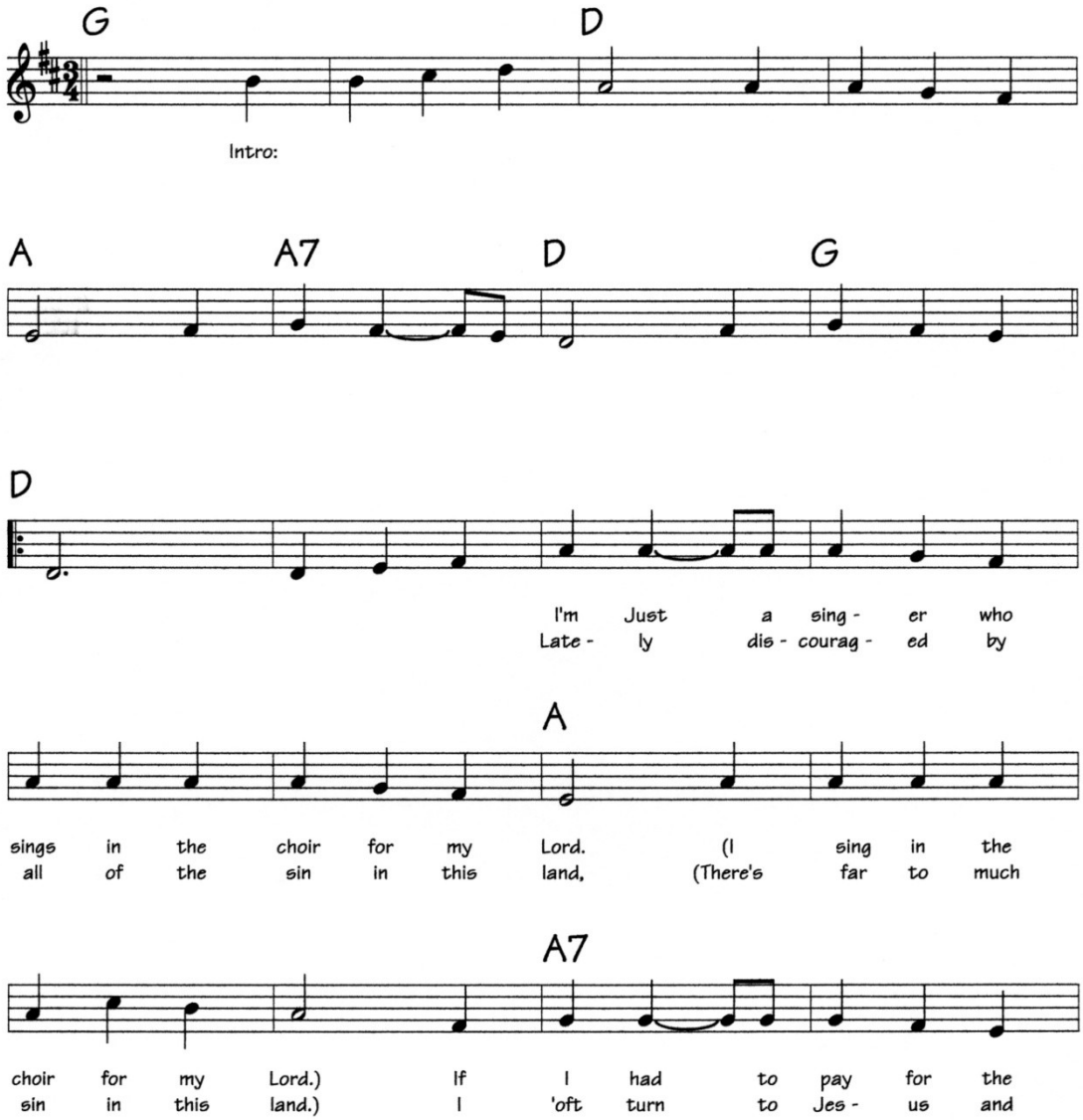

F
And when I think a-bout those tear-drops on your face,
Bb F
I can't be-lieve I left, not say-ing that I love you.
C F C C7 F
I'm com-ing home. This time to stay.
F7 Bb F
I'm com-ing home a-gain. I nev-er should have left you.
C
I nev-er thought that I could ev-er sink so low.
C7 F F7 Bb
There comes a day, a child must find his way

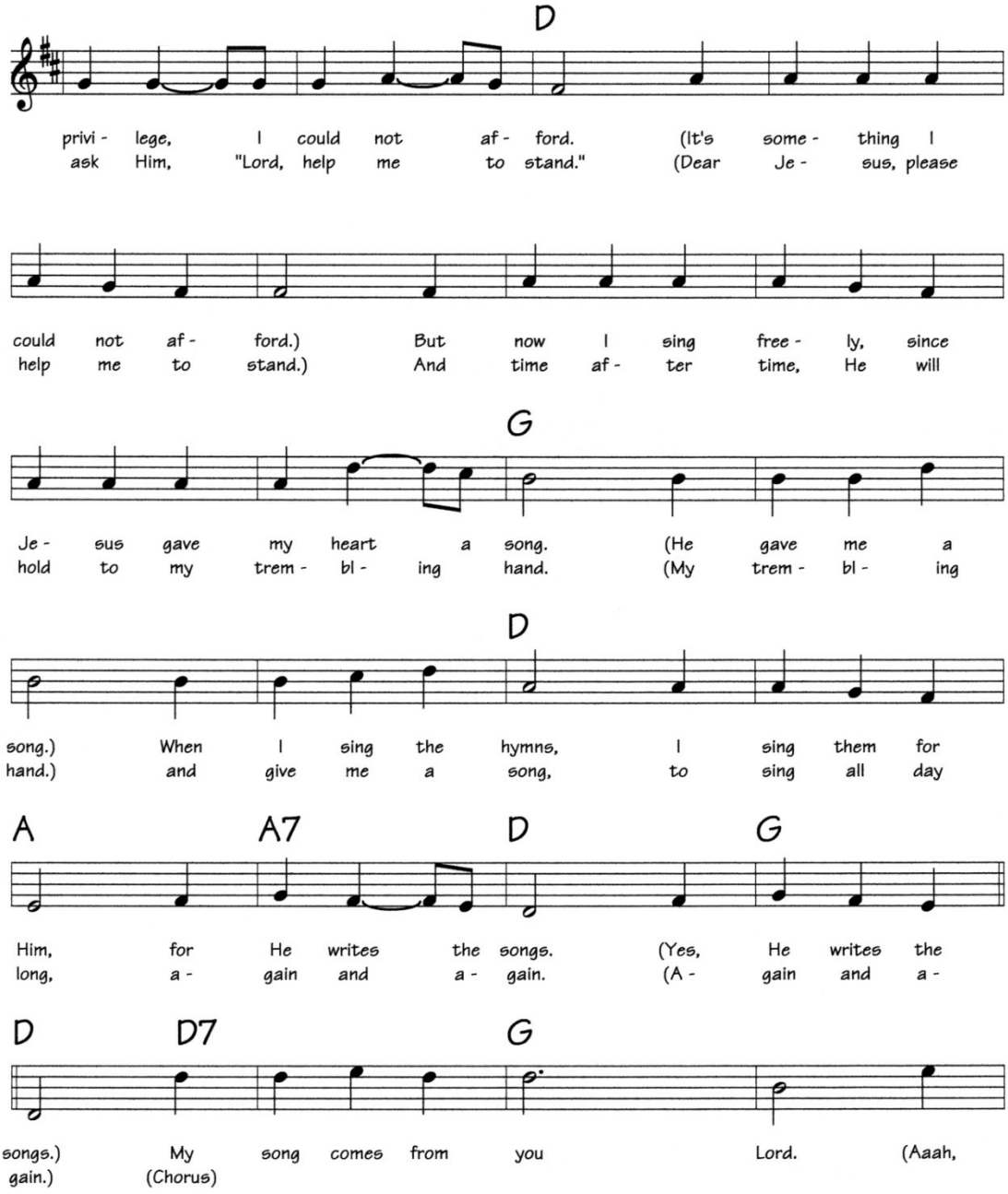

F
C7
F
back to the fa - ther.
Back home to stay.
C
C7
F
Tag:

My Song Comes From You Lord

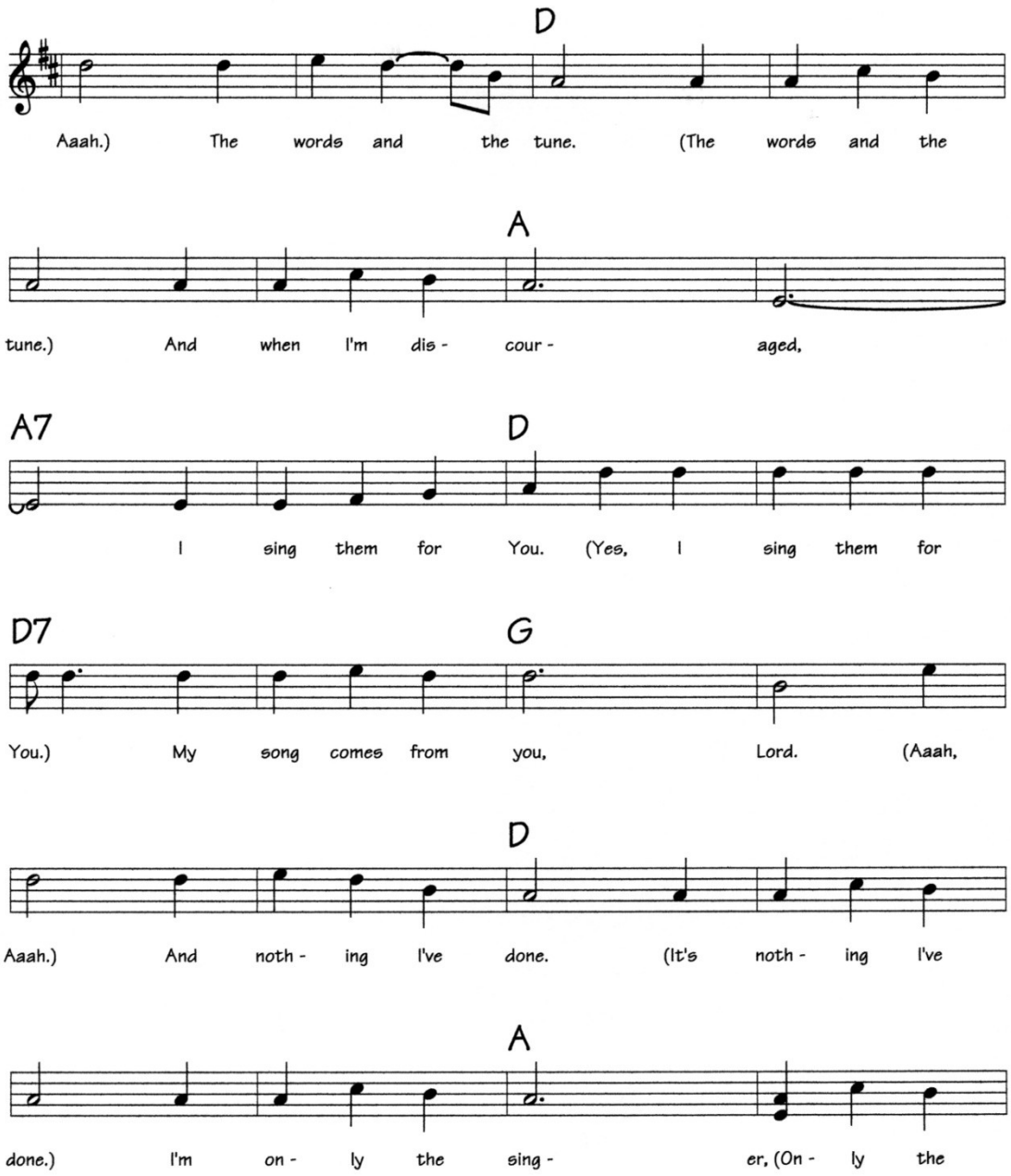
By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1988

Tempo = 140

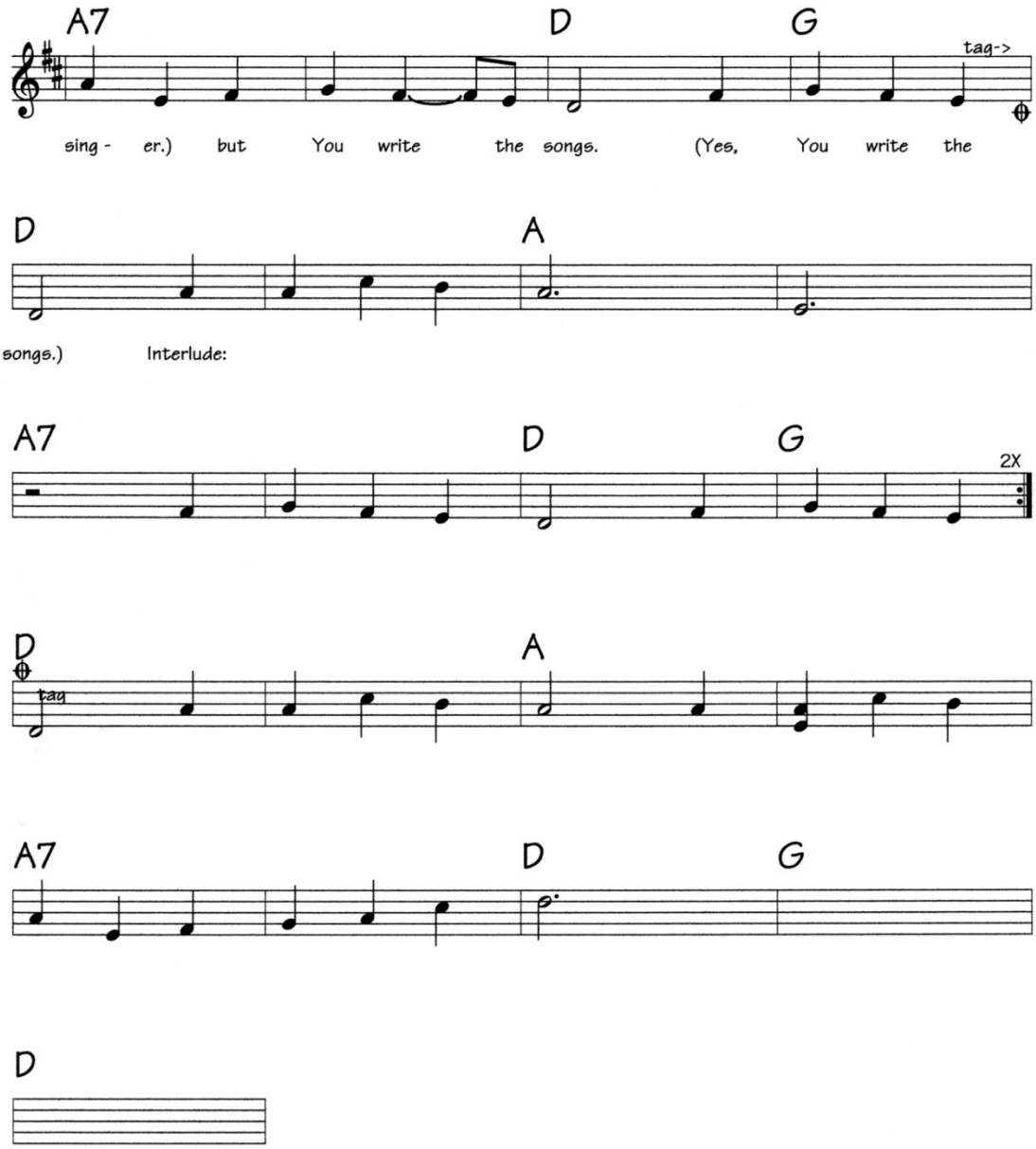




My Song Comes From You Lord - Page 2



My Song Comes From You Lord - Page 3

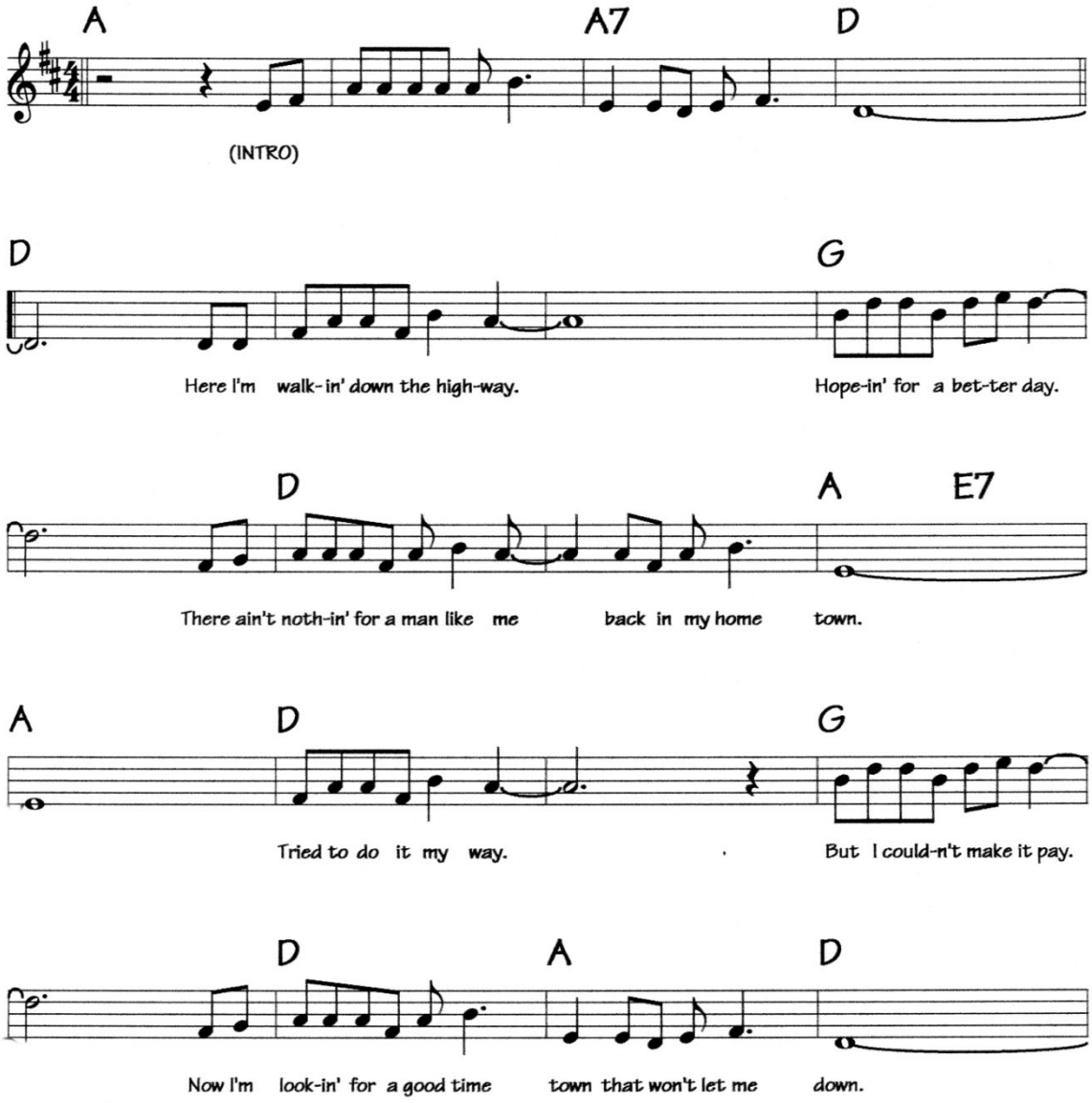


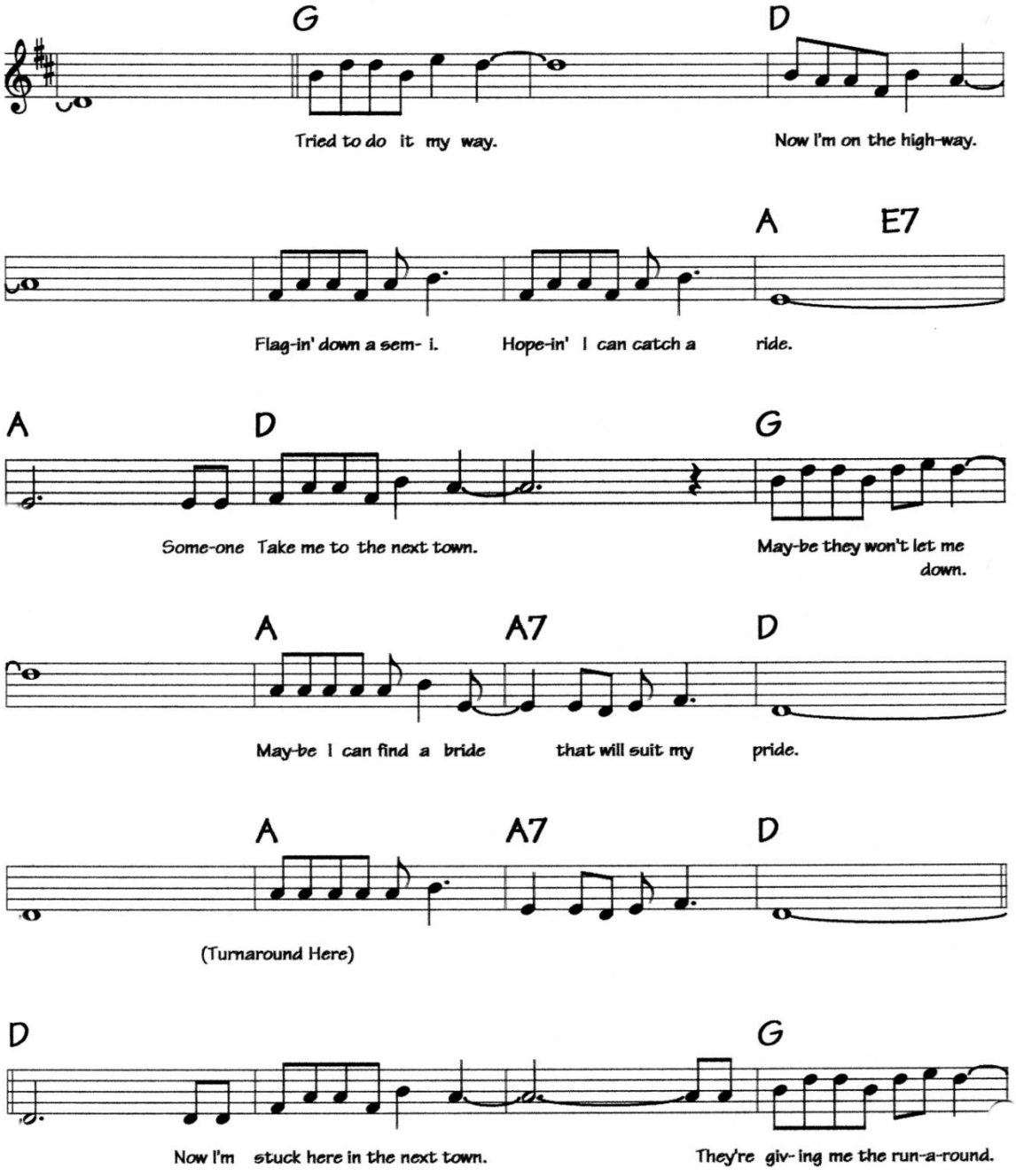
My Song Comes From You Lord - Page 4

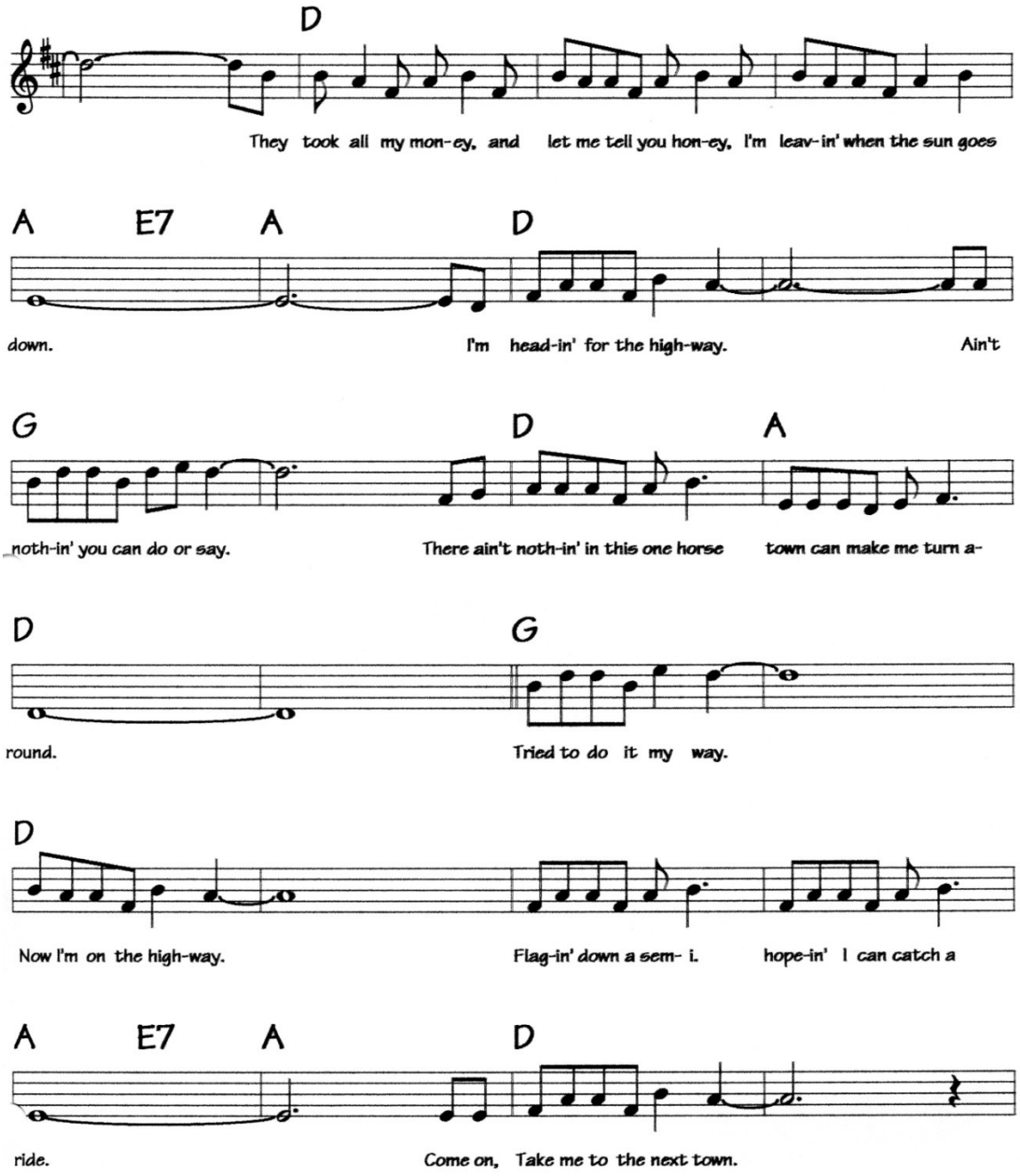
SEMI-RIDER

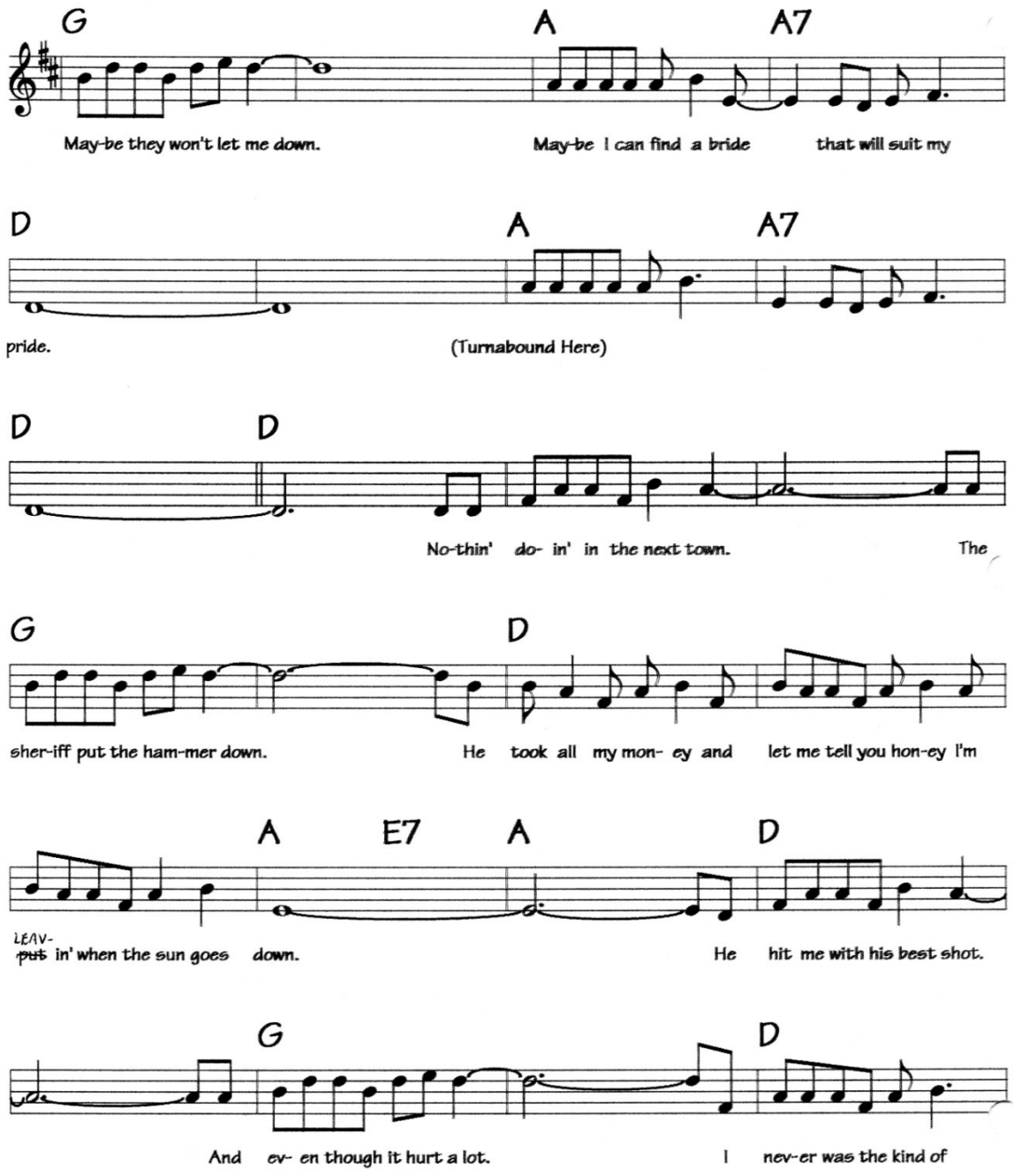
By: Lyndell Martin/Tristan Ratliff
© 2010

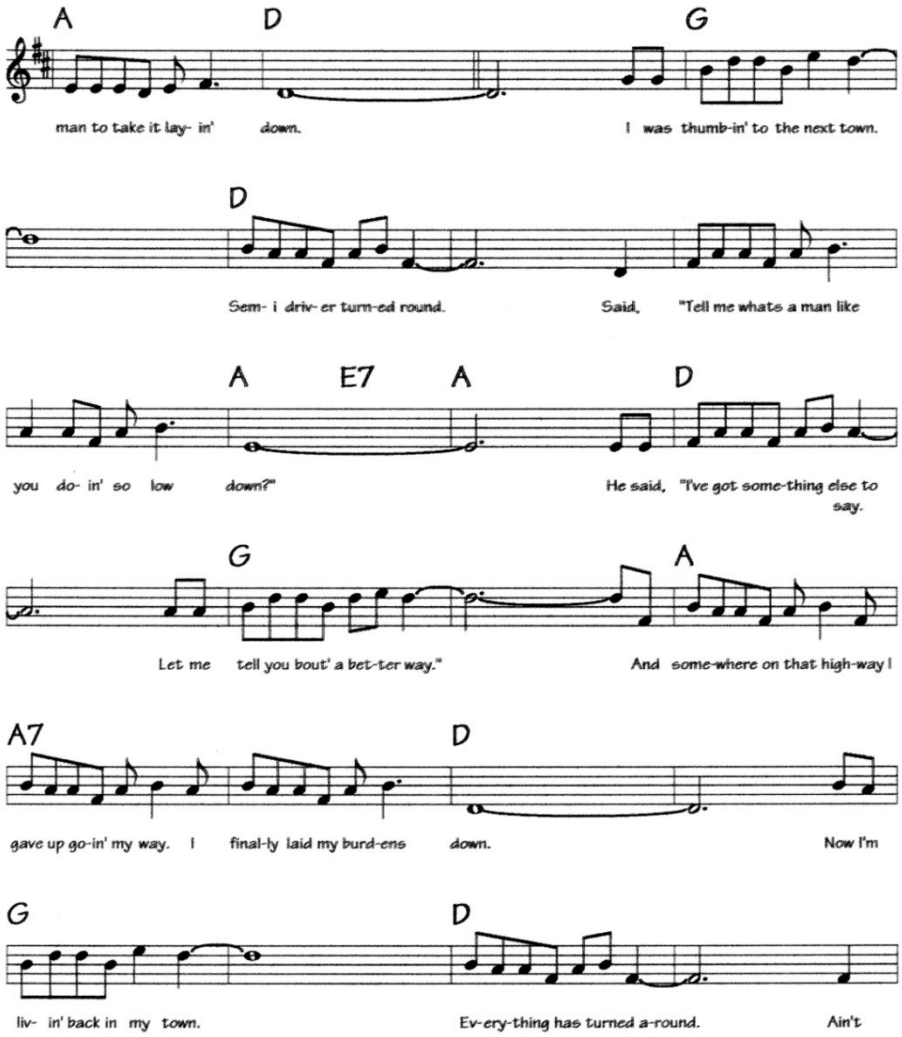
Tempo = 128



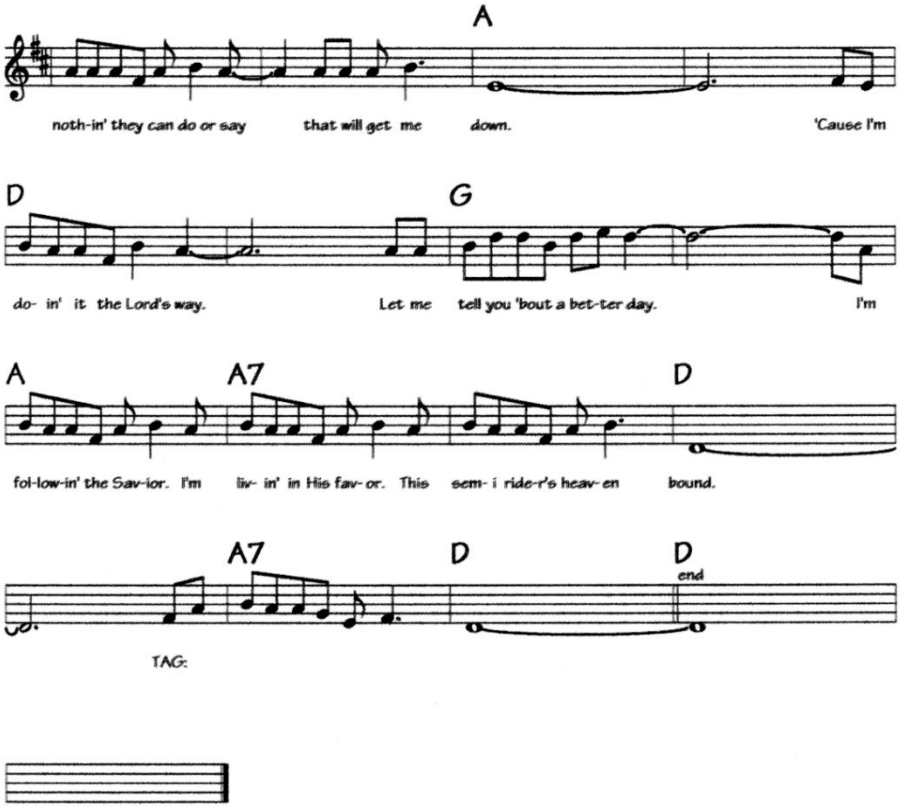

G
D
Tried to do it my way.
Now I'm on the high-way.
A
E7
Flag-in' down a sem- i.
Hope-in' I can catch a
ride.
A
D
G
Some-one Take me to the next town.
May-be they won't let me
down.
A
A7
D
May-be I can find a bride
that will suit my
pride.
A
A7
D
(Turnaround Here)
D
G
Now I'm stuck here in the next town.
They're giv- ing me the run-a-round.


D
They took all my mon-ey, and let me tell you hon-ey, I'm leav-in' when the sun goes
A E7 A D
down. I'm head-in' for the high-way. Ain't
G D A
noth-in' you can do or say. There ain't noth-in' in this one horse town can make me turn a-
D G
round. Tried to do it my way.
D
Now I'm on the high-way. Flag-in' down a sem- i. hope-in' I can catch a
A E7 A D
ride. Come on, Take me to the next town.


G A A7
May-be they won't let me down. May-be I can find a bride that will suit my
D A A7
pride. (Turnabound Here)
D D
No-thin' do- in' in the next town. The
G D
sher-iff put the ham-mer down. He took all my mon- ey and let me tell you hon-ey I'm
A E7 A D
LEAV-
~~put~~ in' when the sun goes down. He hit me with his best shot.
G D
And ev- en though it hurt a lot. I nev-er was the kind of



SEMI-RIDER - Page 5



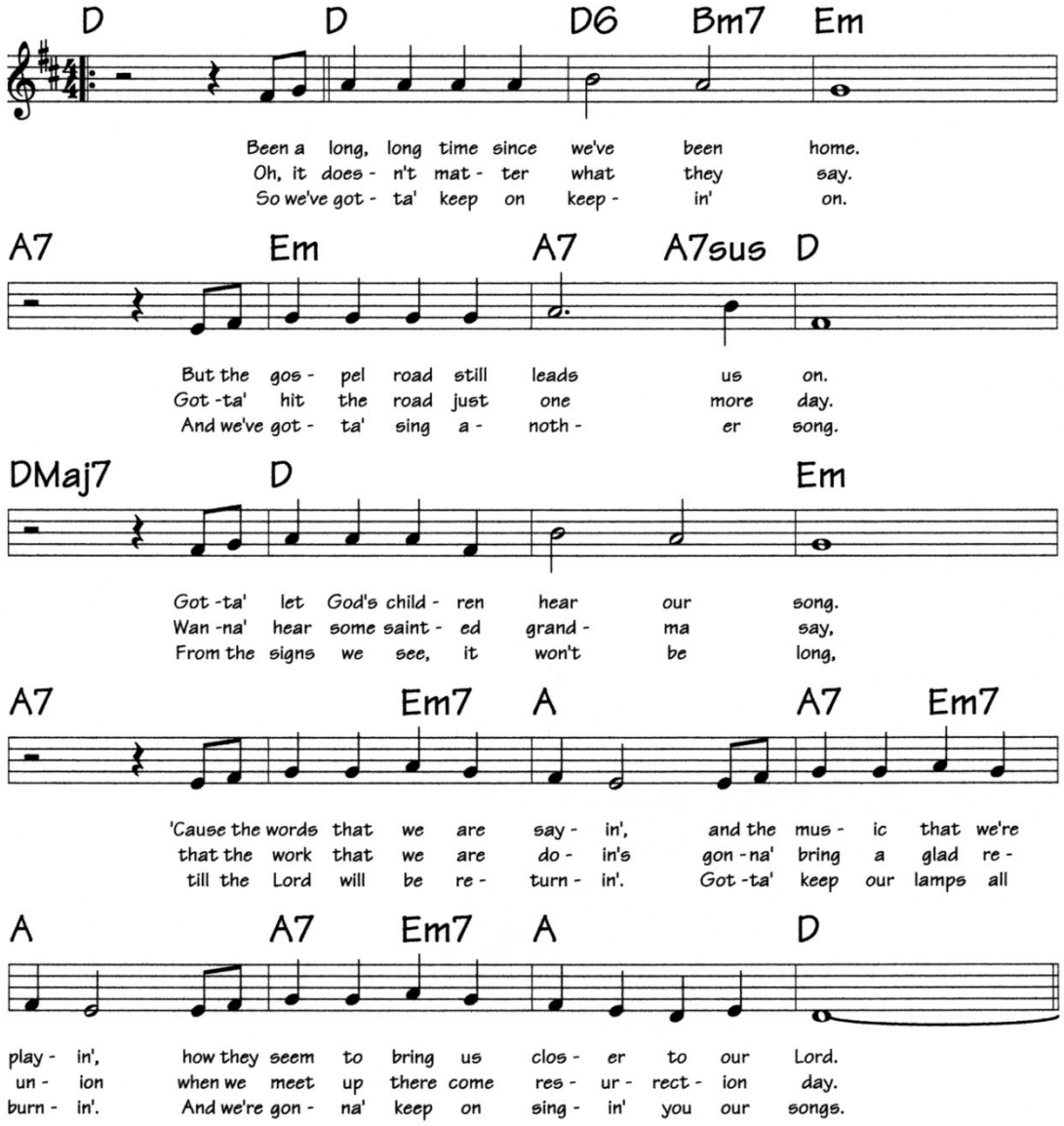
SEMI-RIDER - Page 6

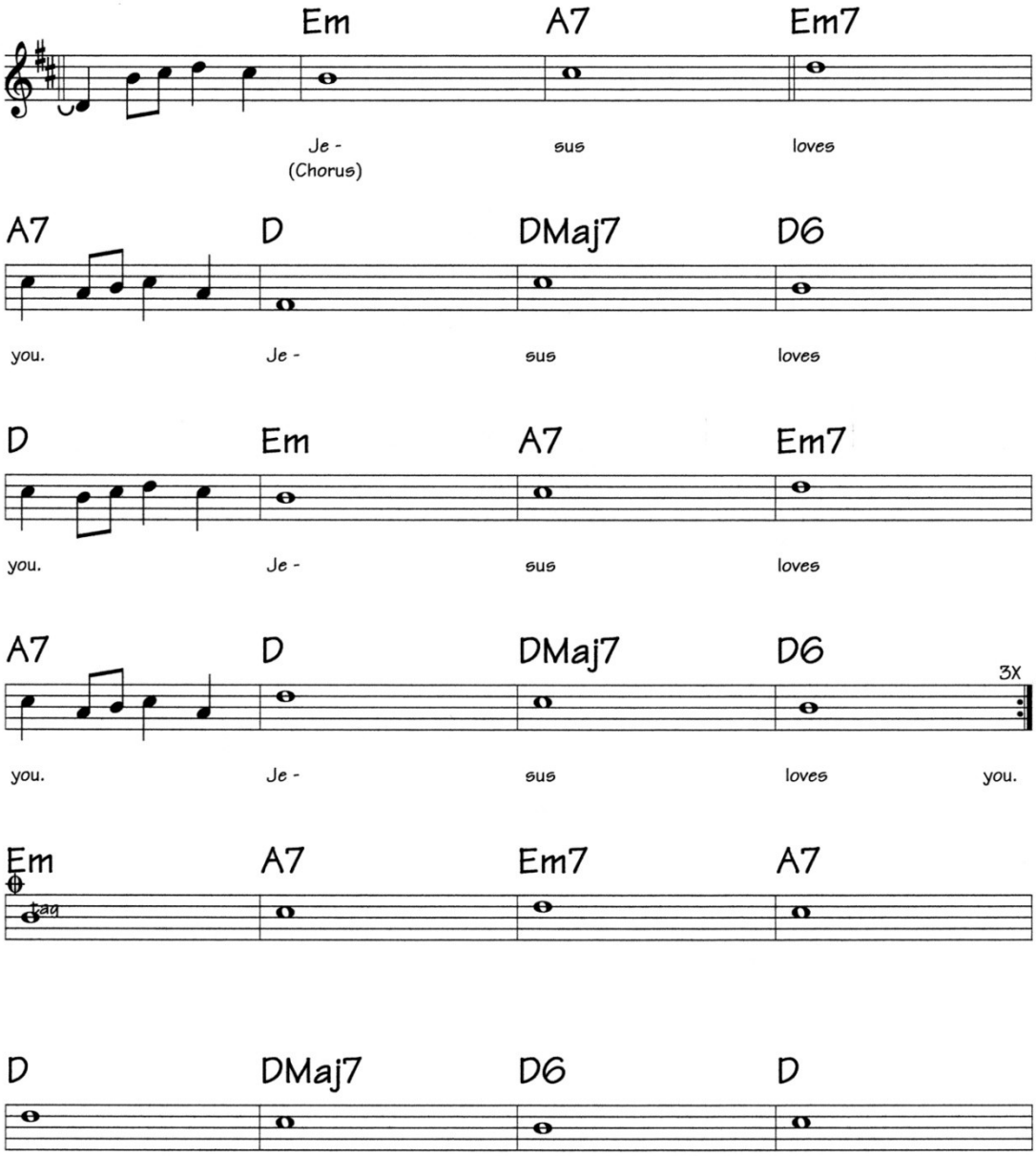
©

The Gospel Road

By: Lyndll R. Martin
© 1995

Tempo = 195



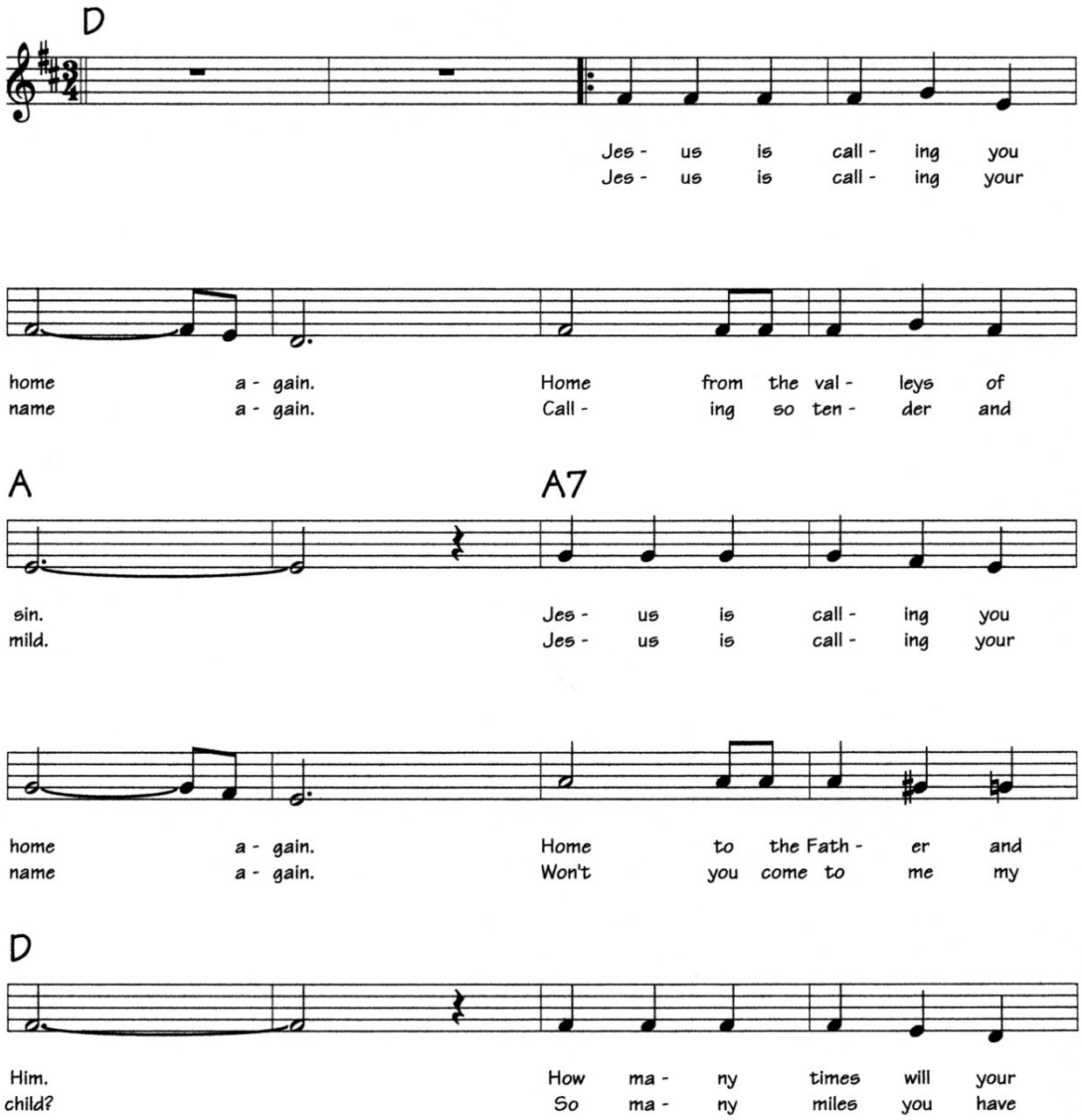


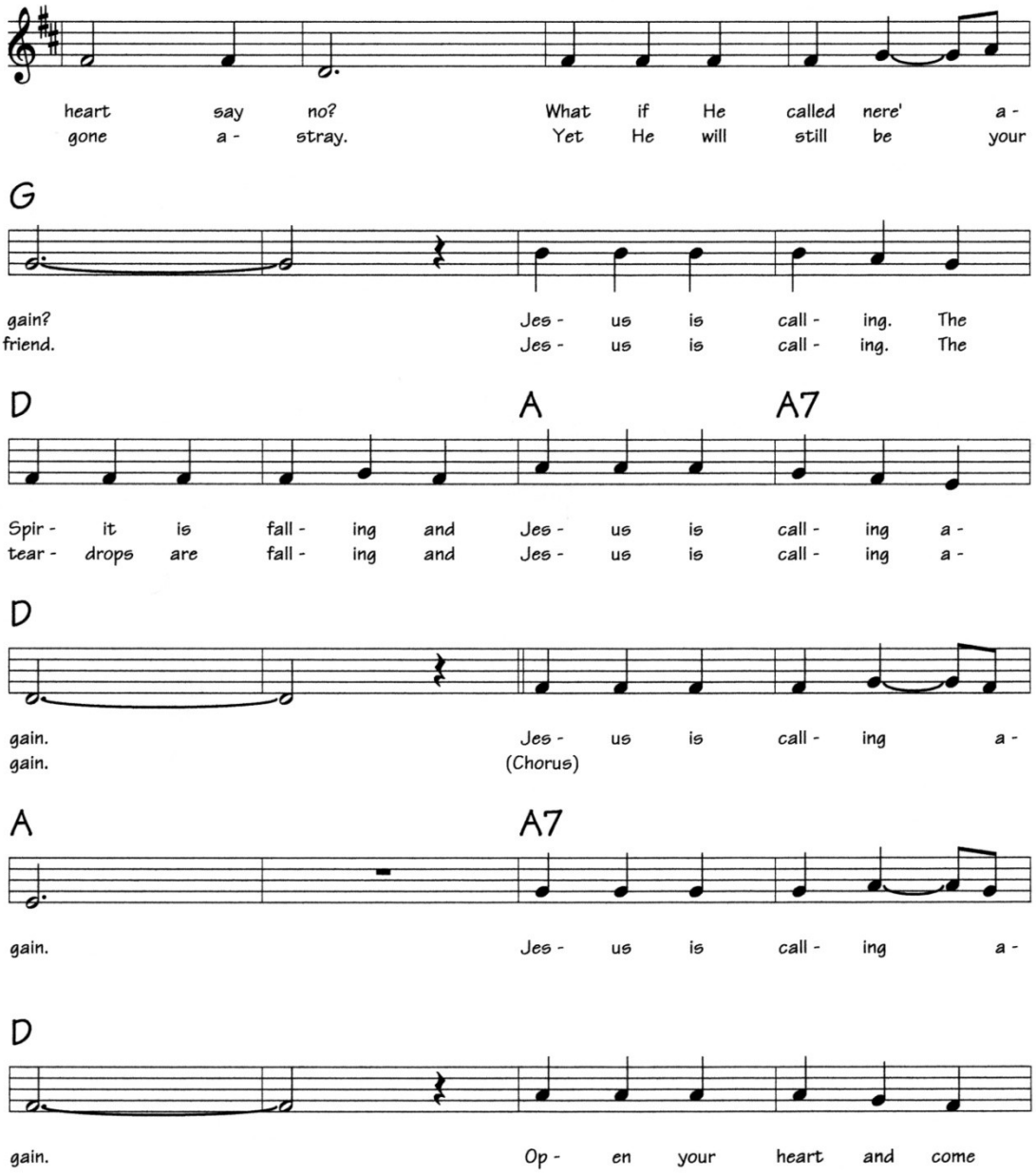
The Gospel Road - Page 2

Jesus Is Calling Again

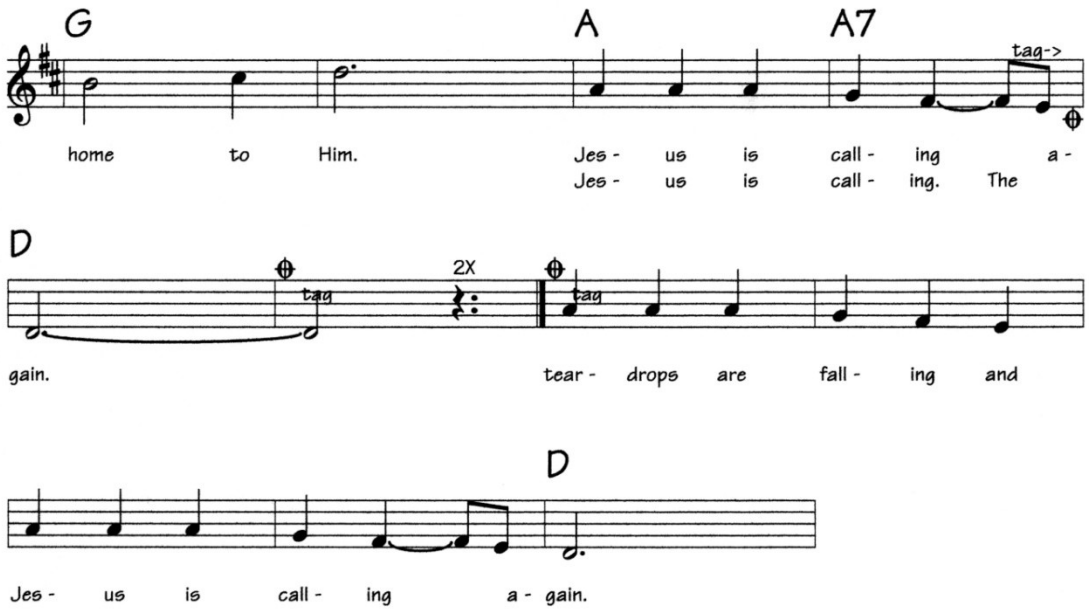
By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1989

Tempo = 125





Jesus Is Calling Again - Page 2

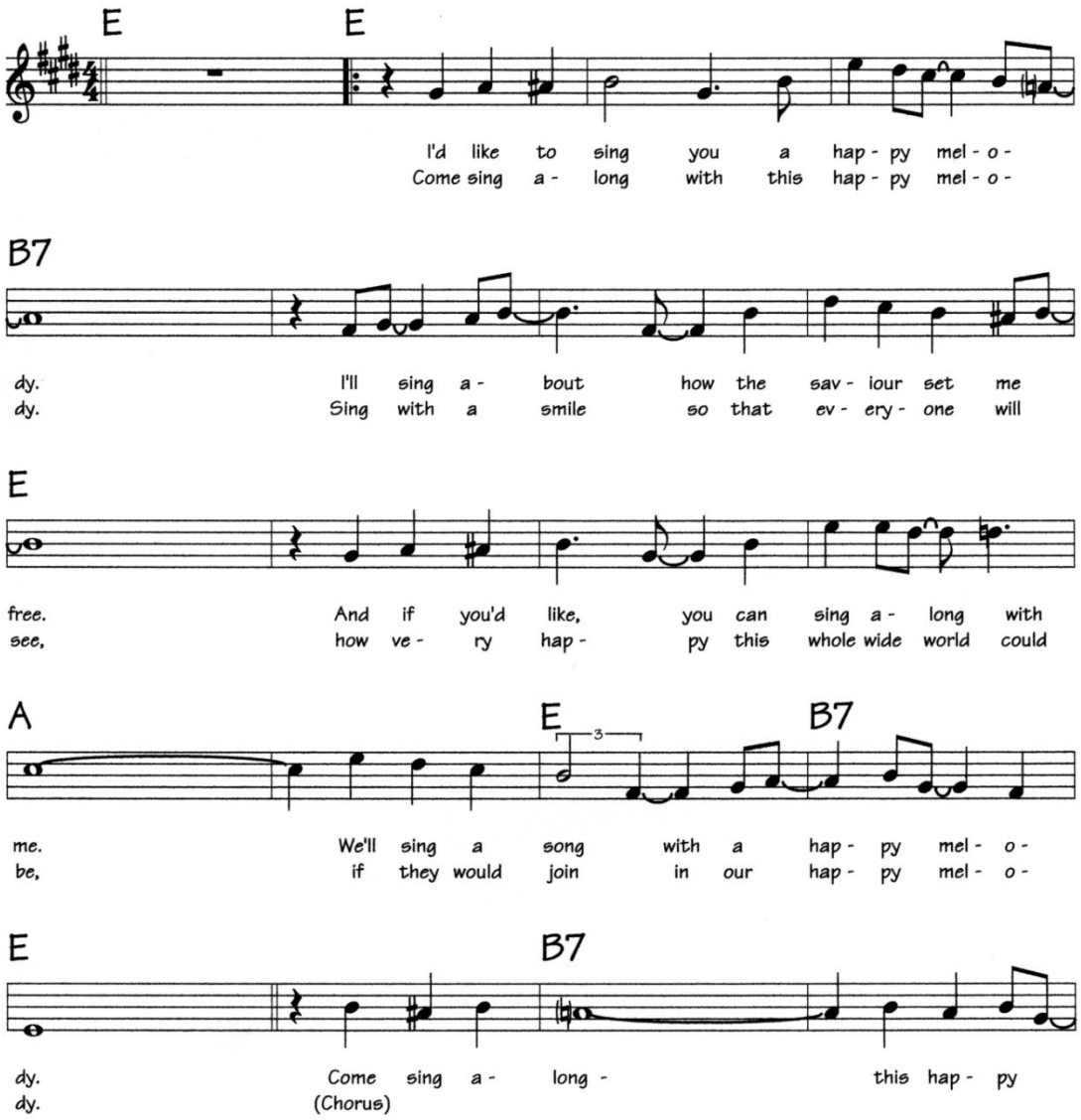


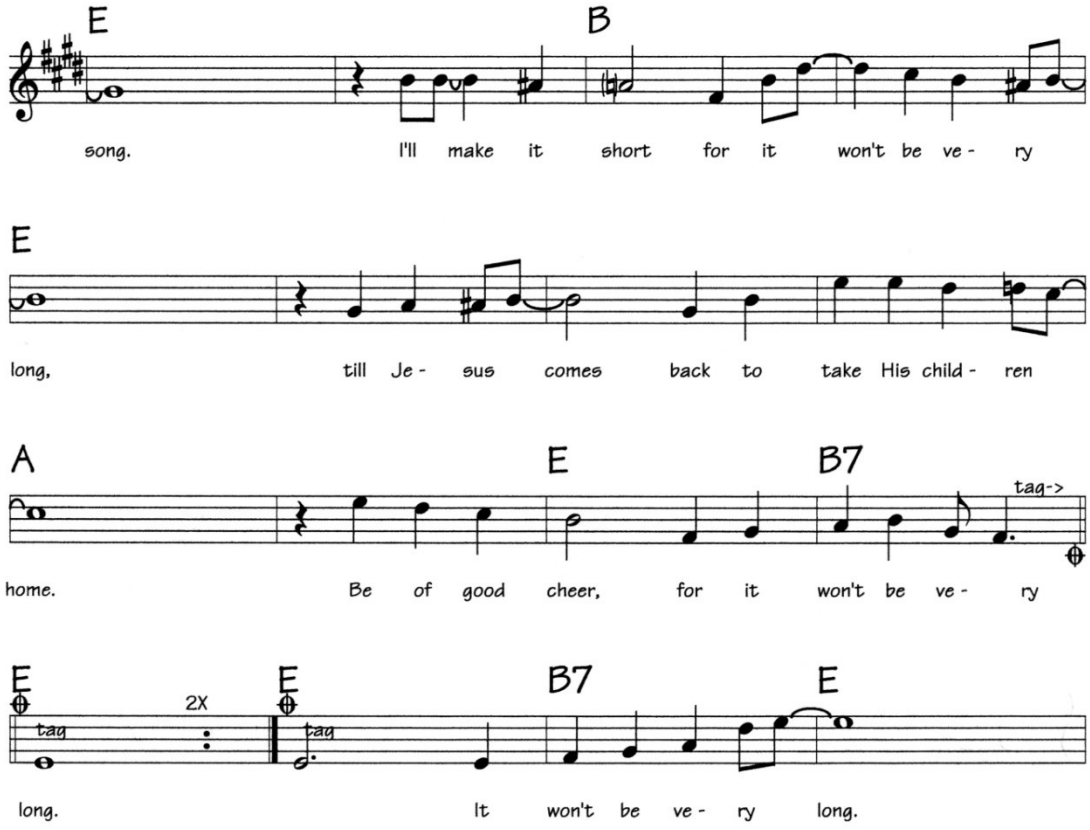
Jesus Is Calling Again - Page 3

A Happy Melody

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1994

Tempo = 140



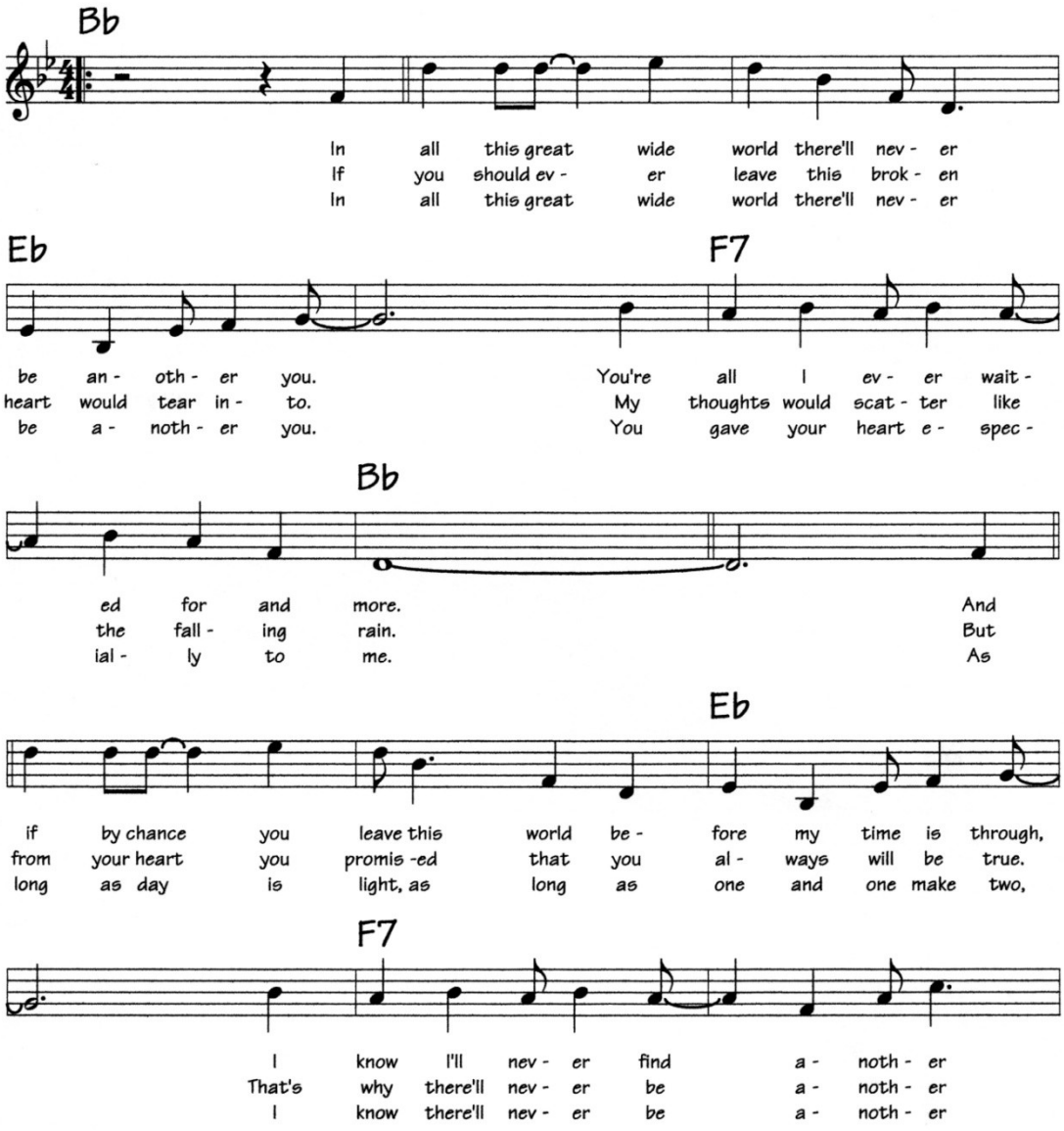


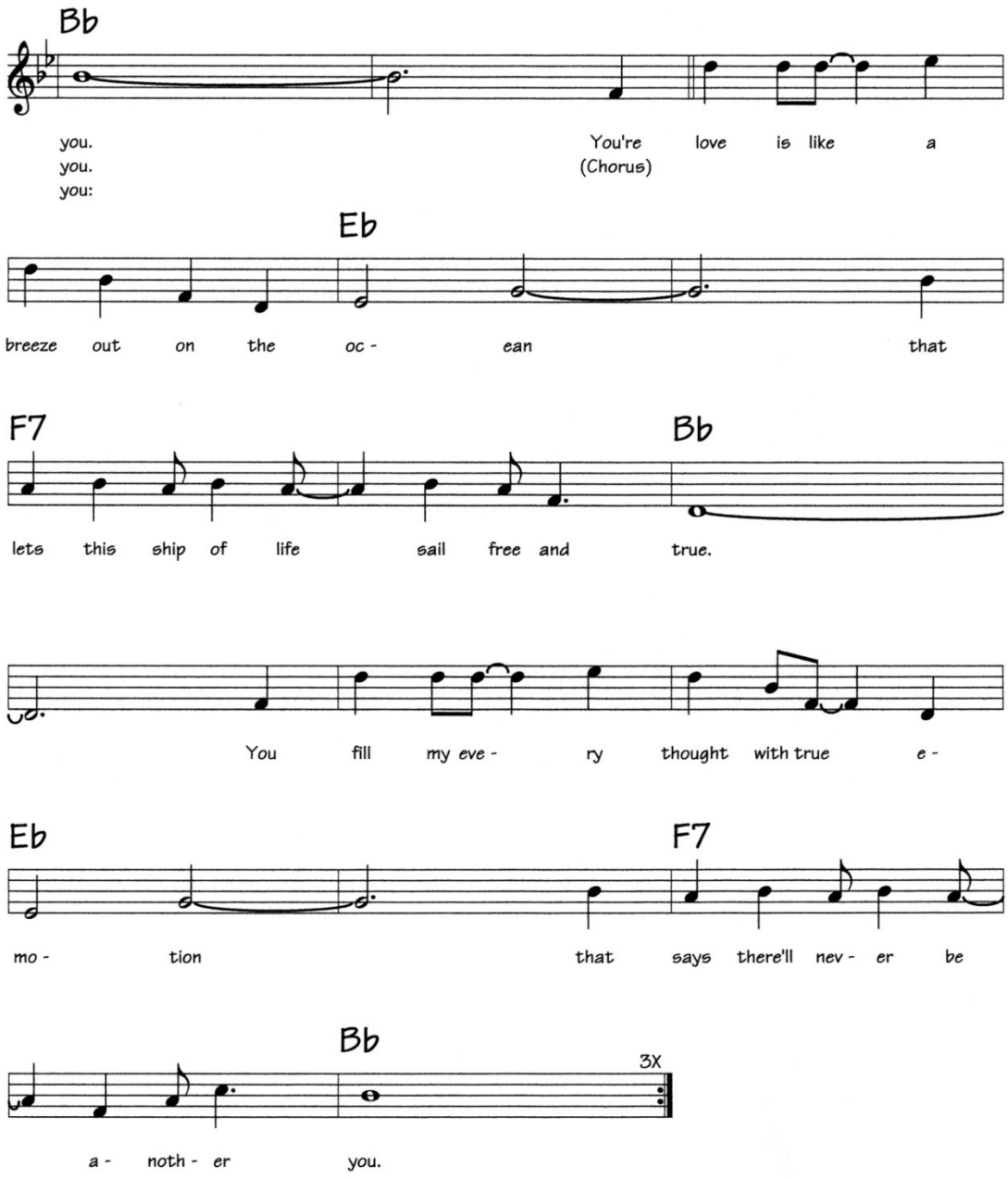
A Happy Melody - Page 2

There'll Never Be Another You

BIRDIE'S SONG
Tempo = 130

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1994



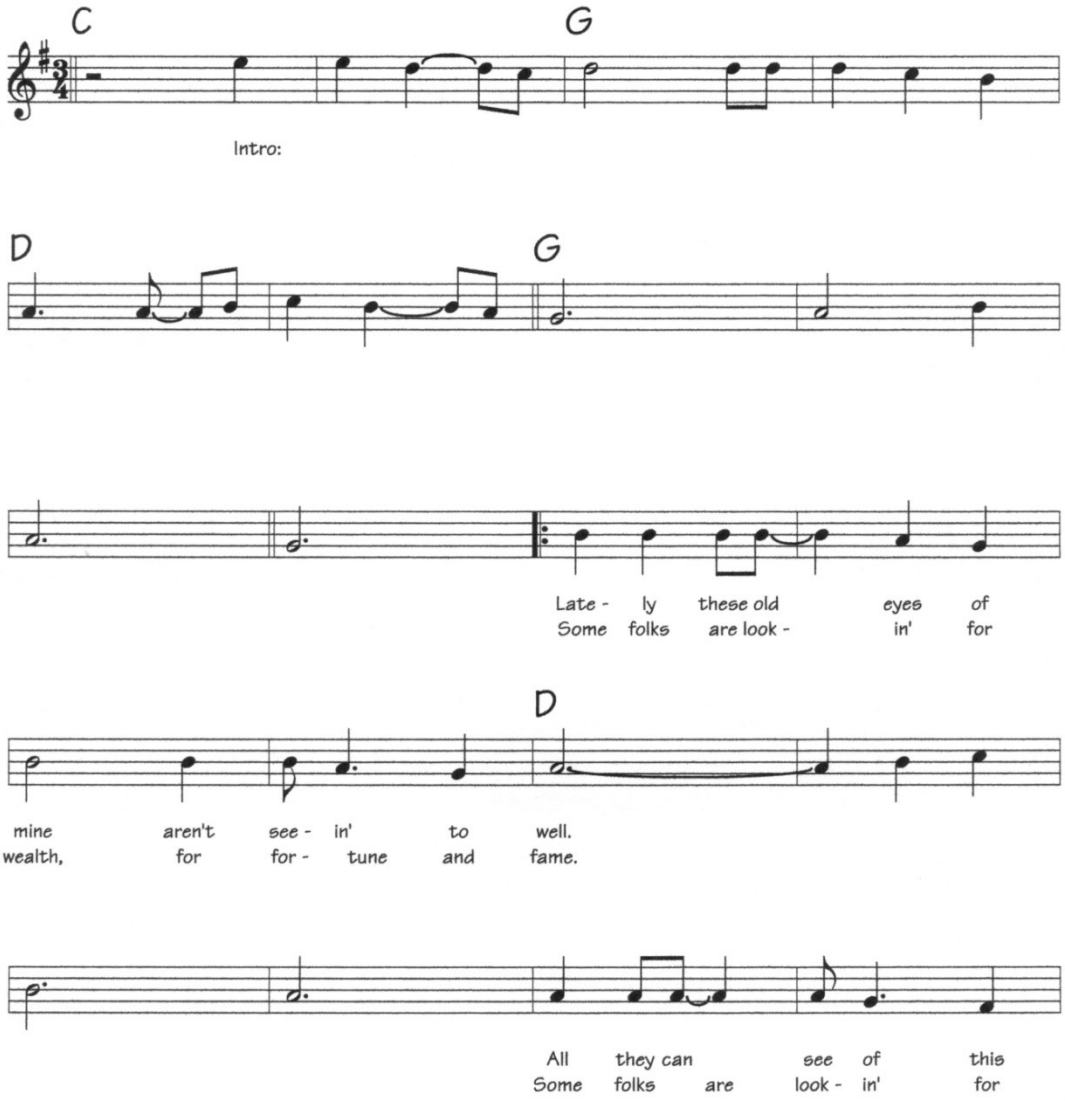


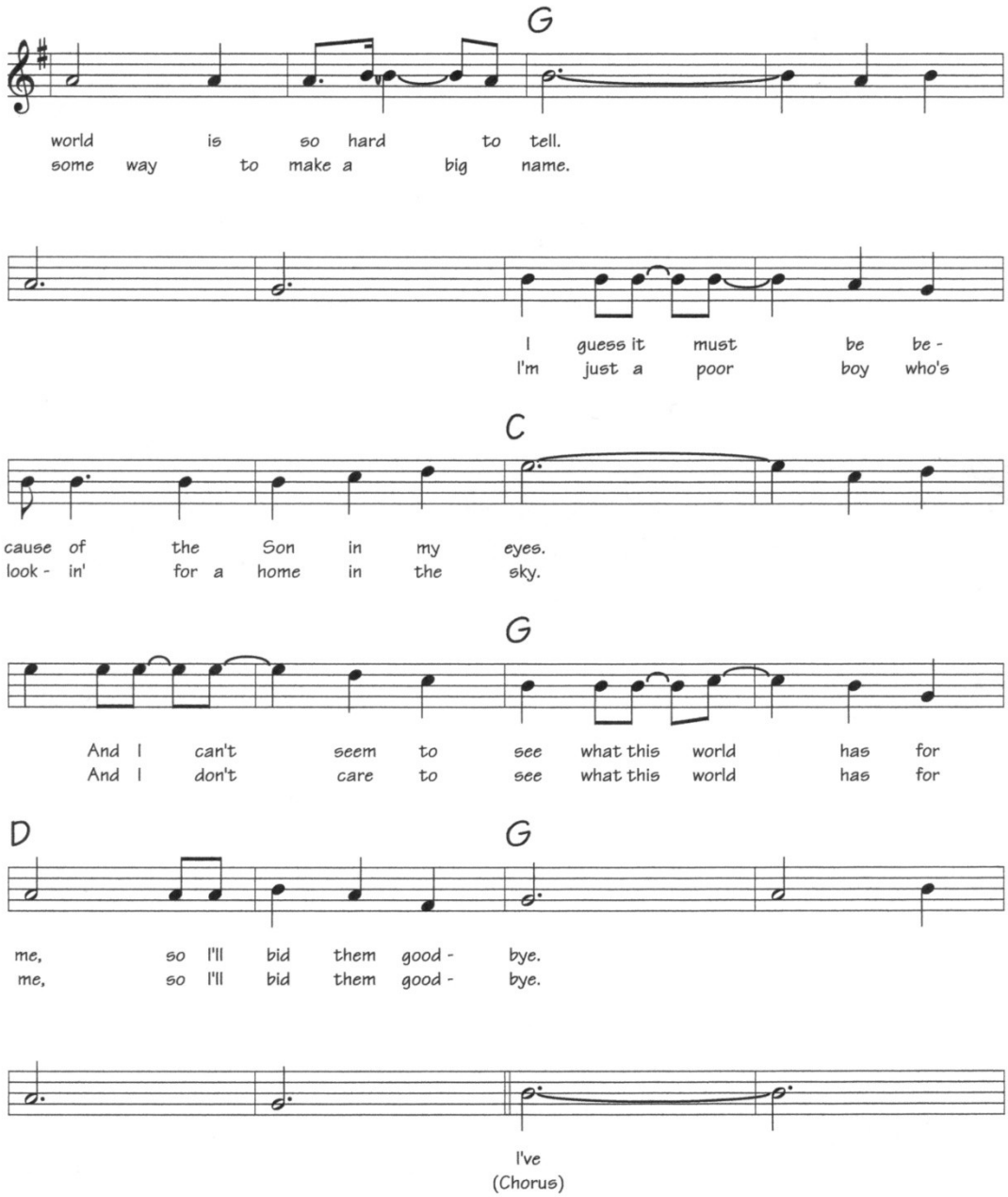
There'll Never Be Another You - Page 2

I've Got The Son N My Eyes

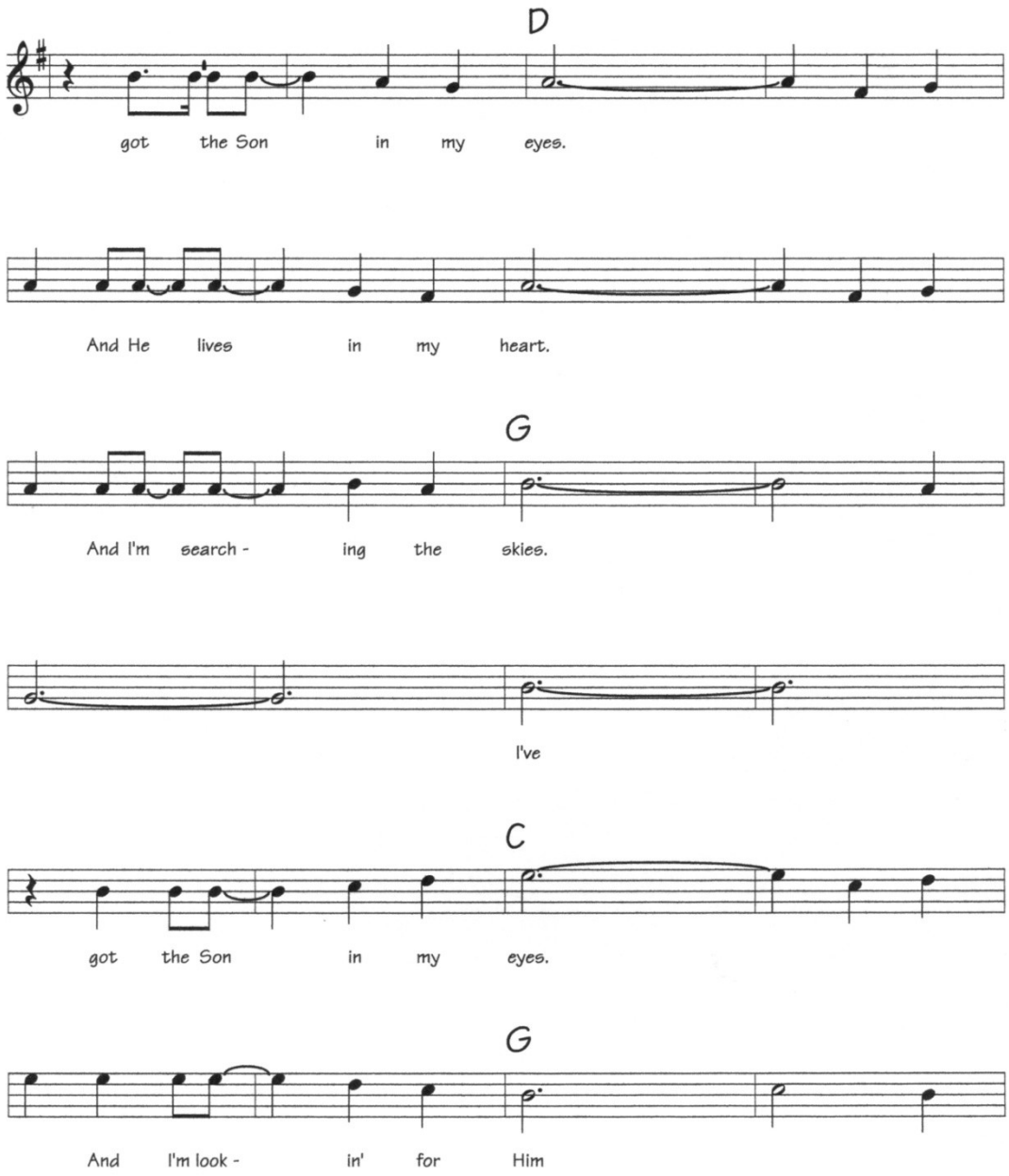
By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1985

Tempo = 145

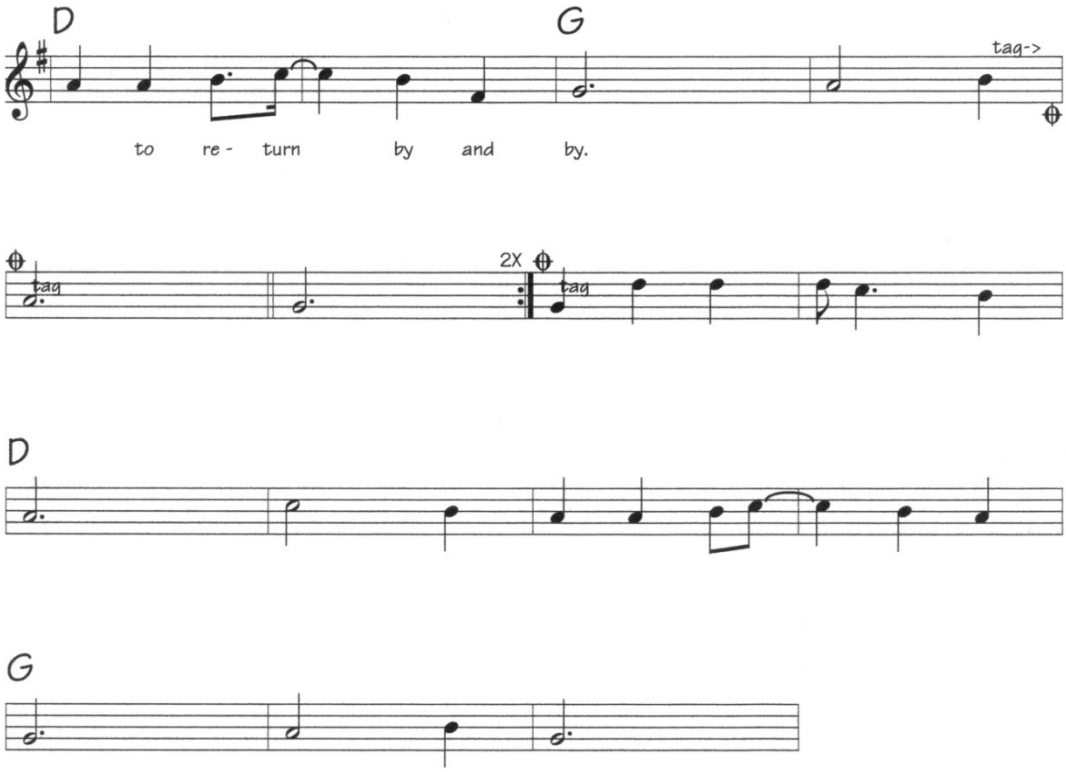




I've Got The Son N My Eyes - Page 2



I've Got The Son N My Eyes - Page 3

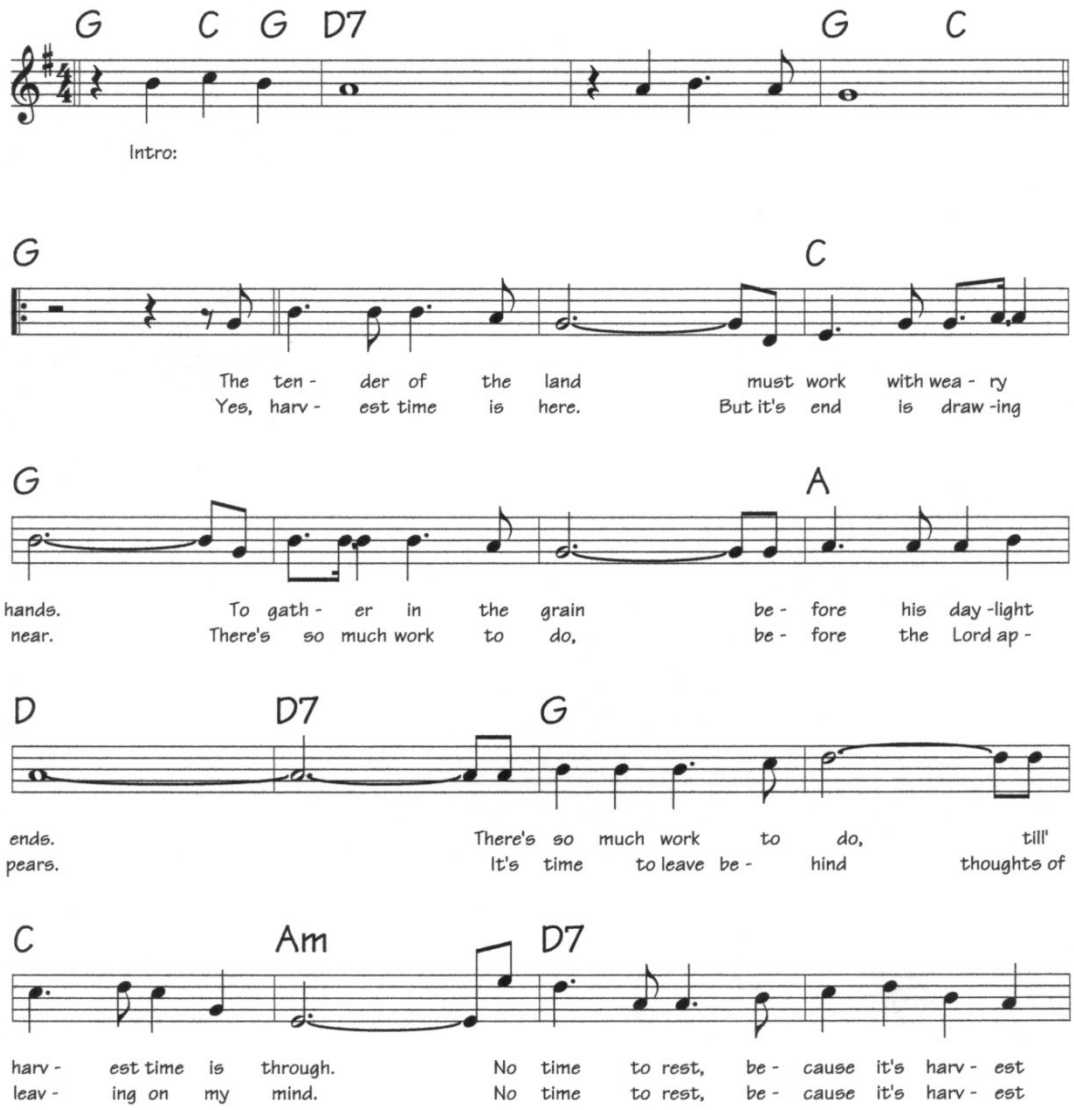


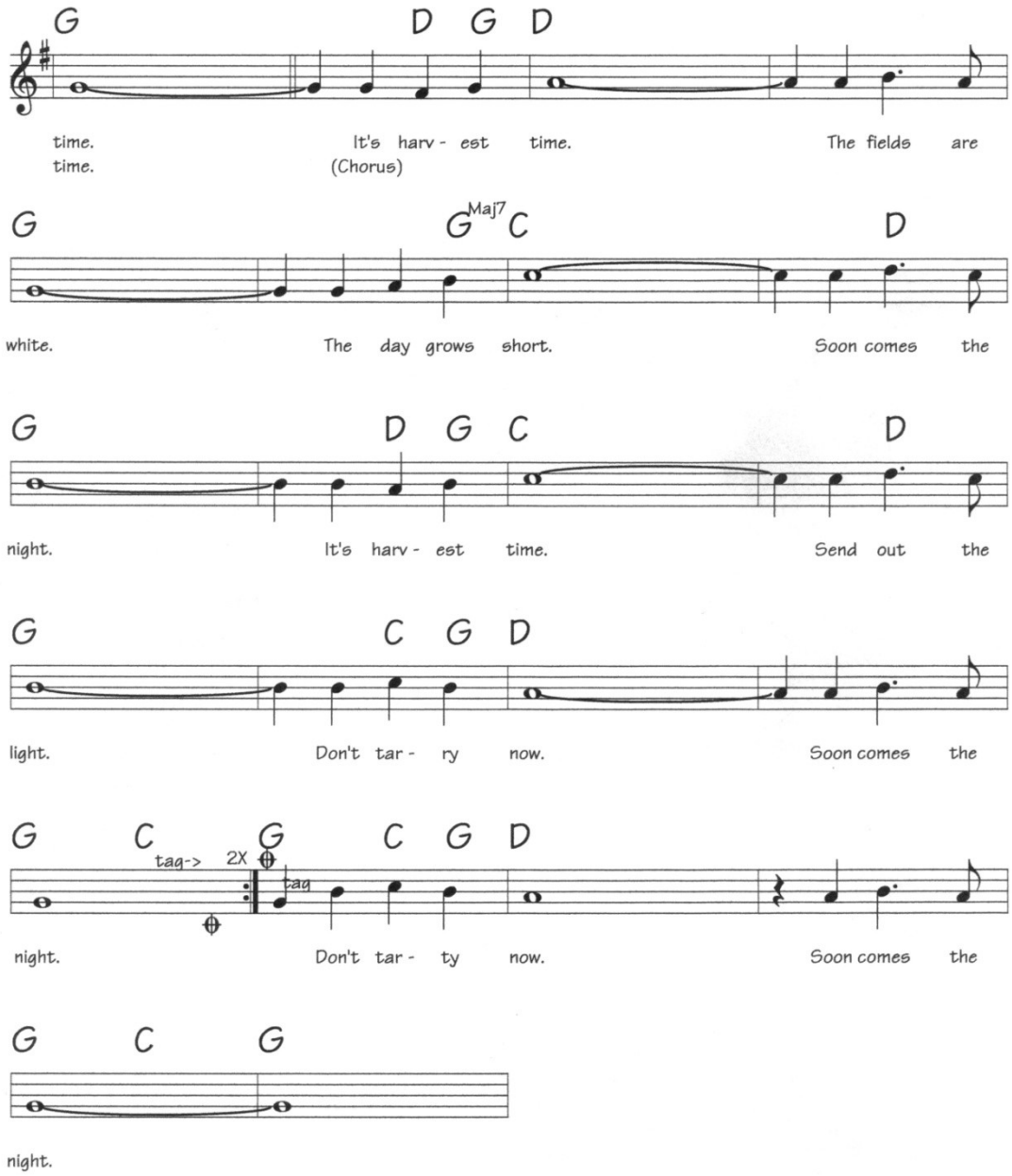
I've Got The Son N My Eyes - Page 4

It's Harvest Time

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1989

Tempo = 105



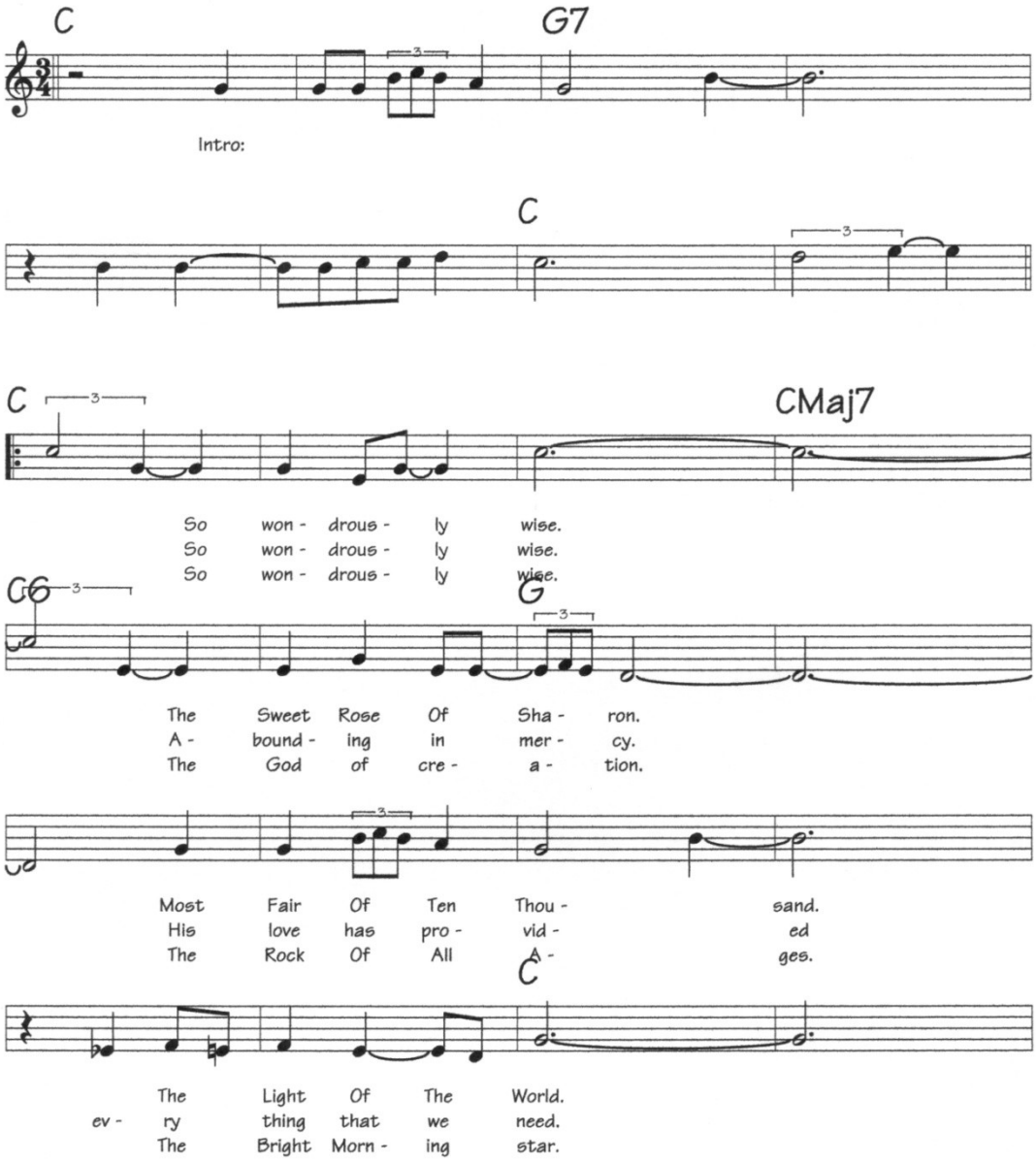


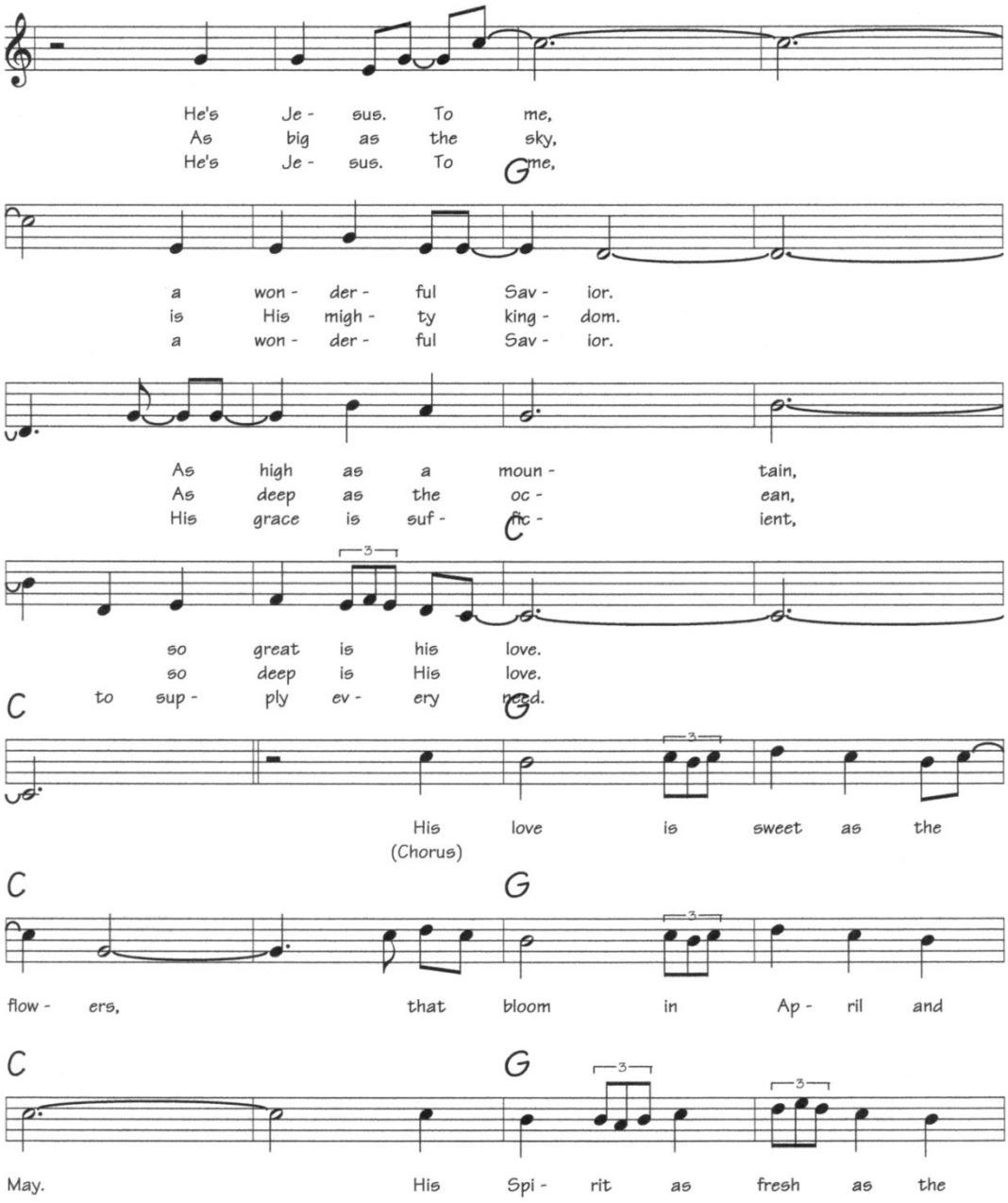
It's Harvest Time - Page 2

His Love

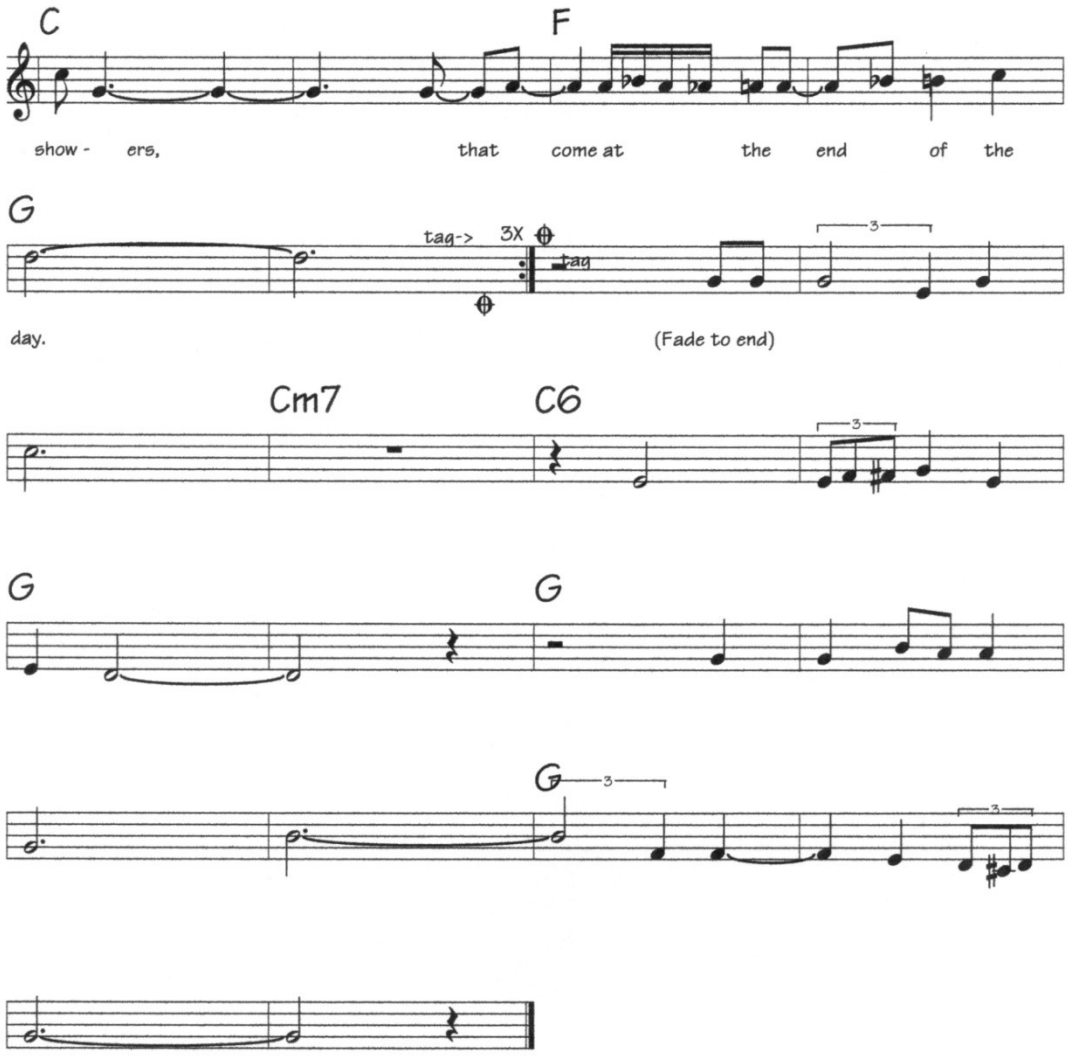
By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1991

Tempo = 175





His Love - Page 2

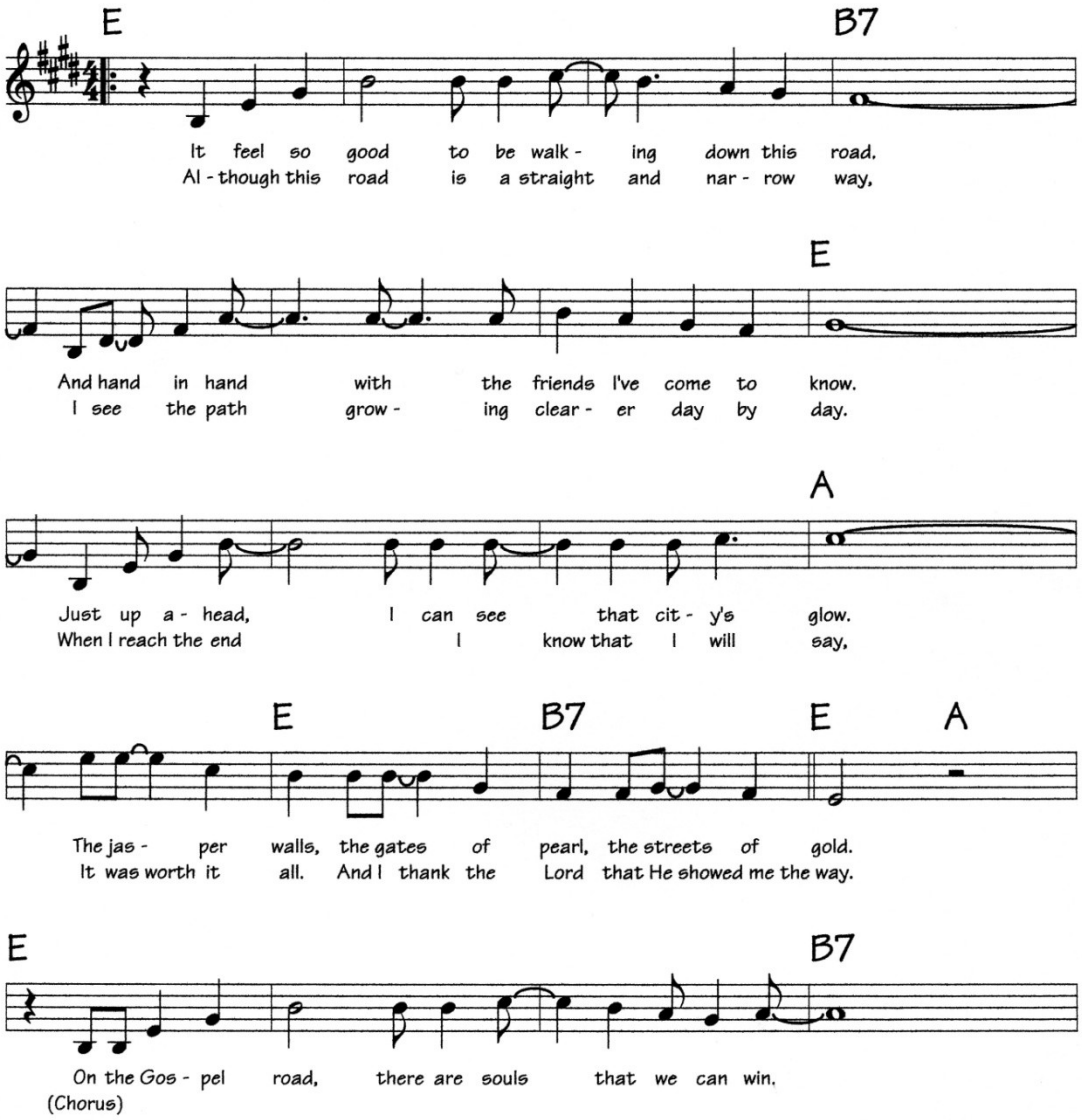


His Love - Page 3

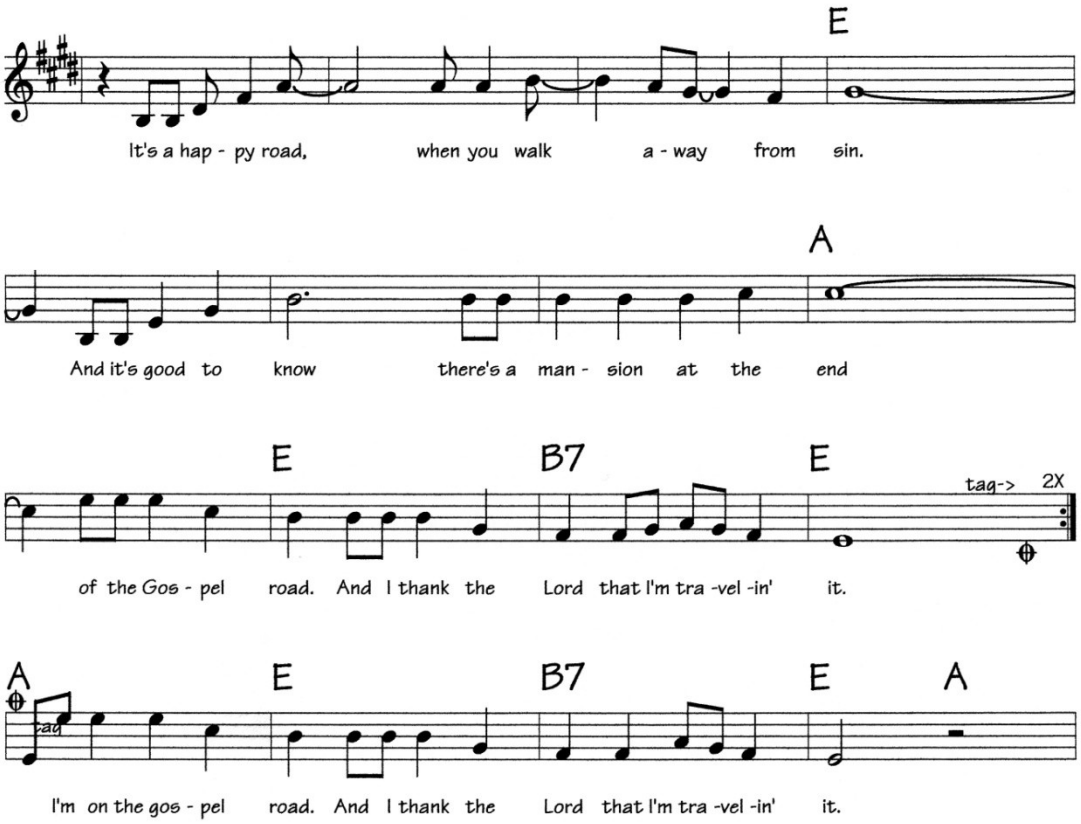
On The Gospel Road

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1988

Tempo = 130



© 1988

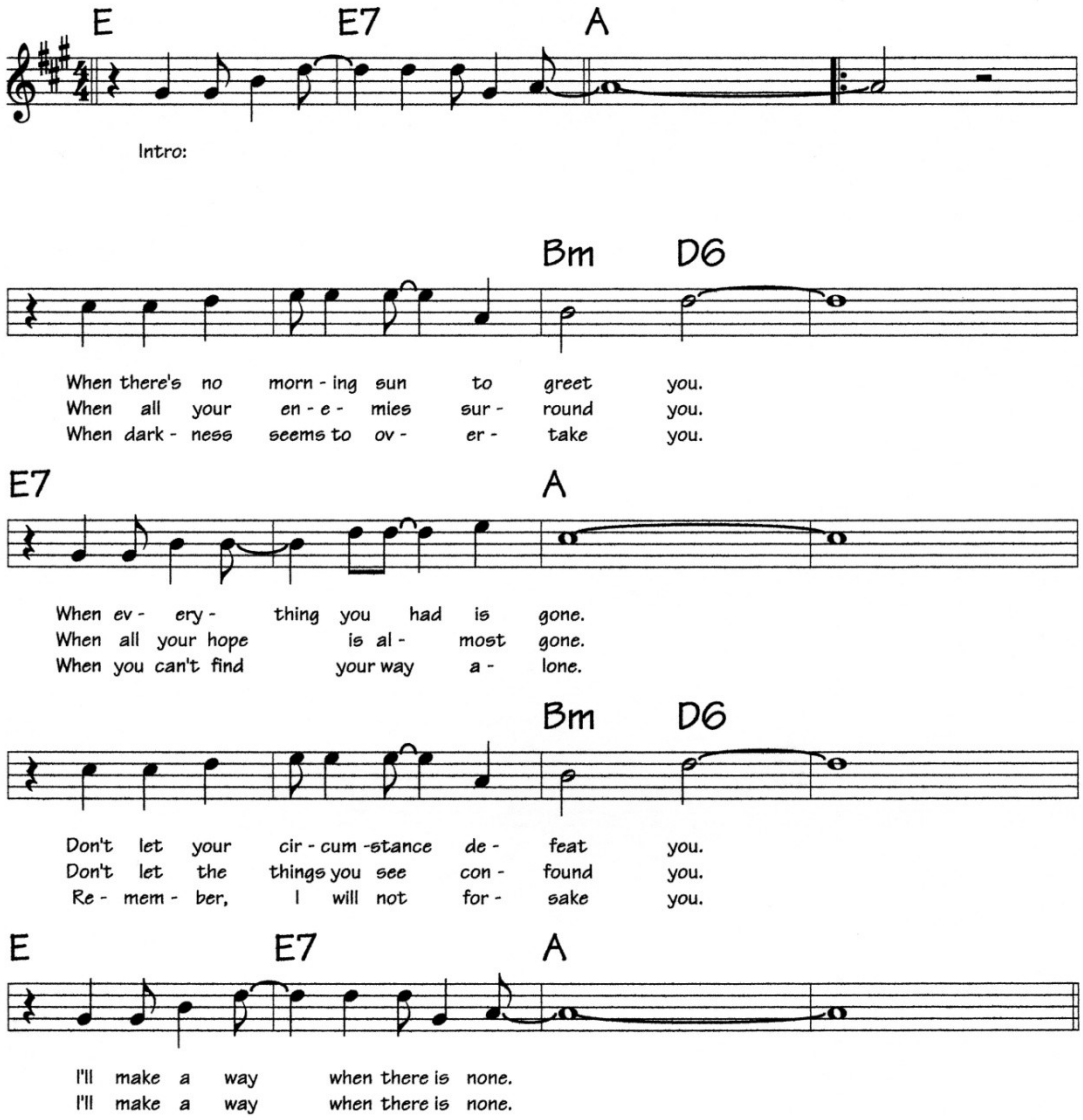


On The Gospel Road - Page 2

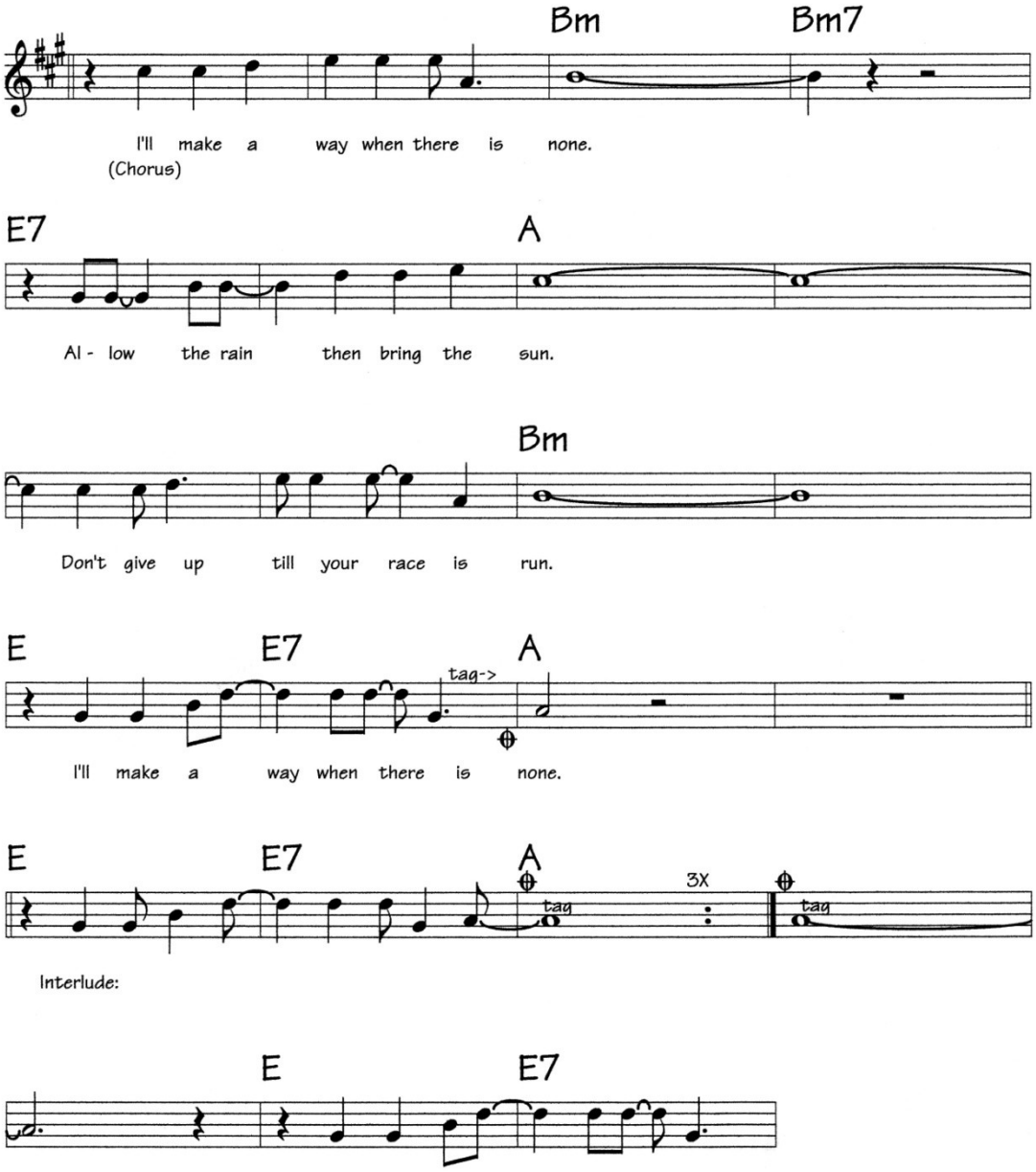
I'll Make A Way When There Is None

Lyndell R. Martin
© 1982

Tempo = 123



© 1982

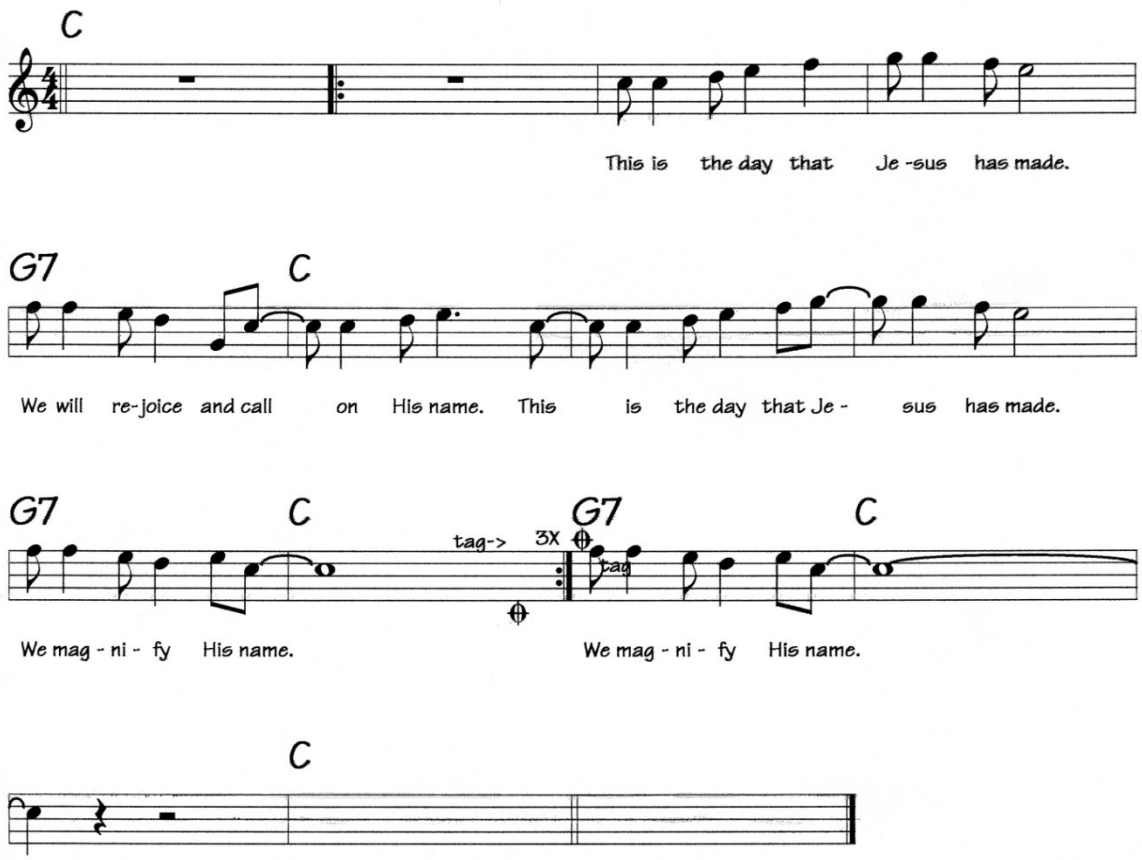


I'll Make A Way When There Is None - Page 2

This Is The Day That Jesus Has Made

(A PRAISE CHORUS)
By: Lyndell R. Martin

Tempo = 120

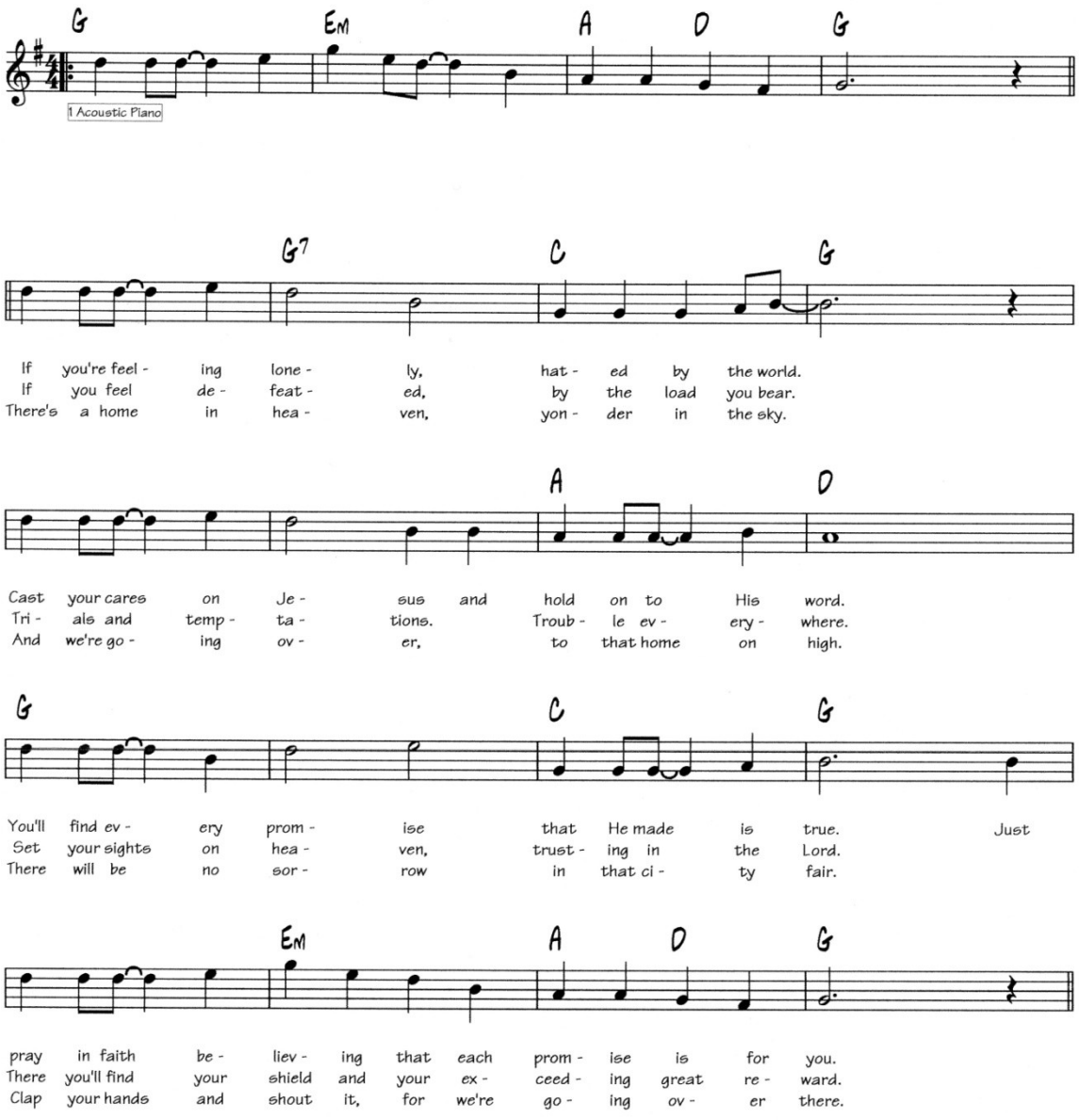


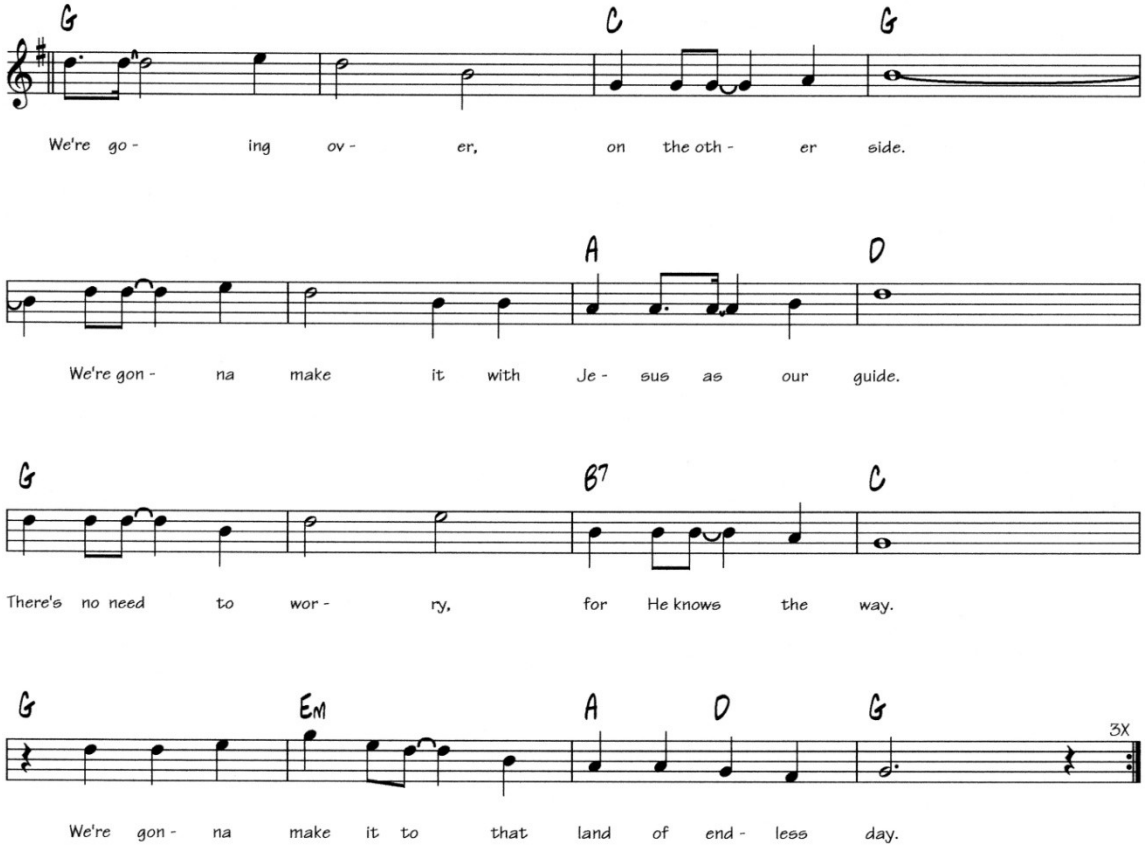
© 1992

We're Going Over

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1982 Words & Music

Tempo = 150



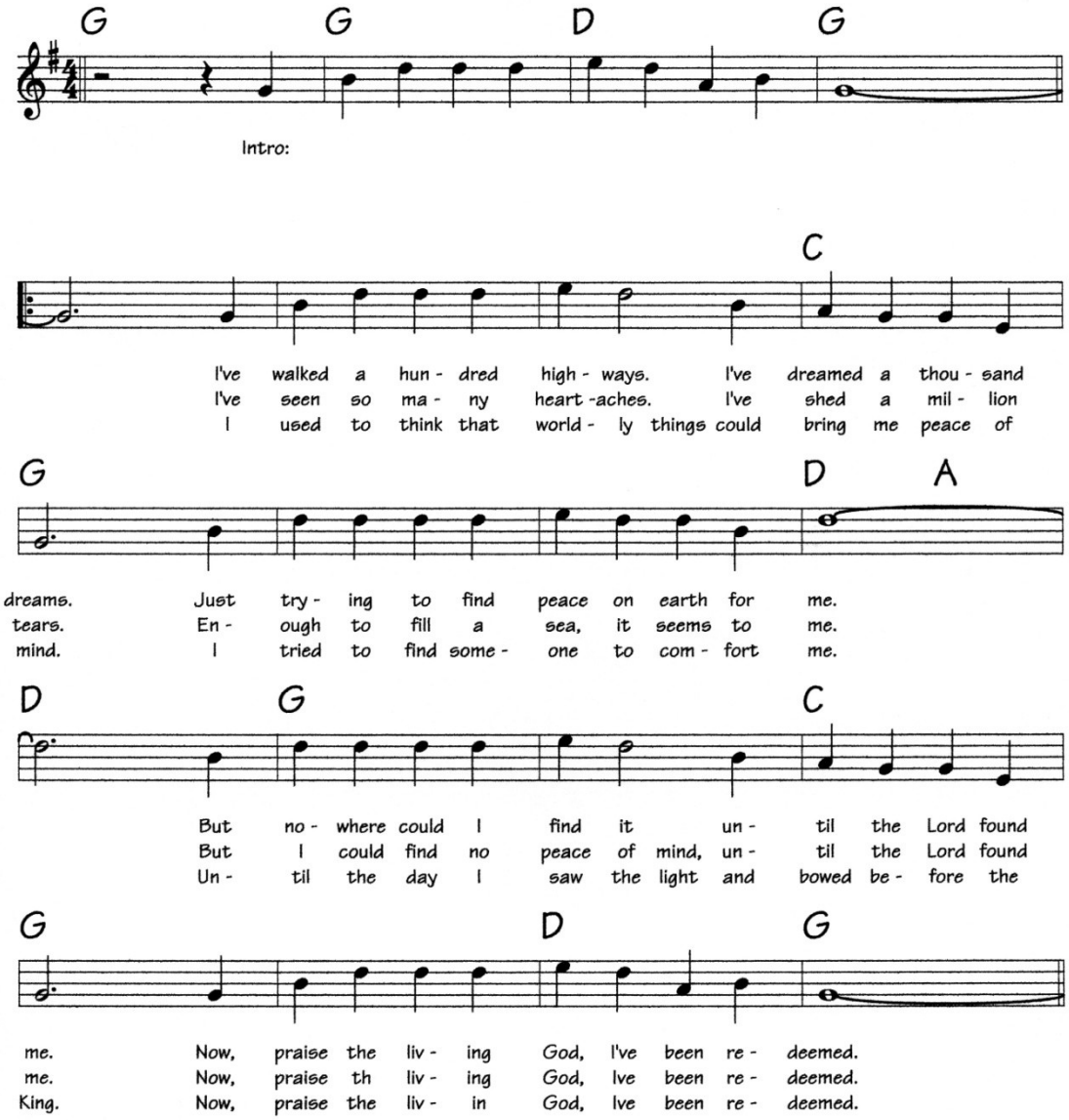


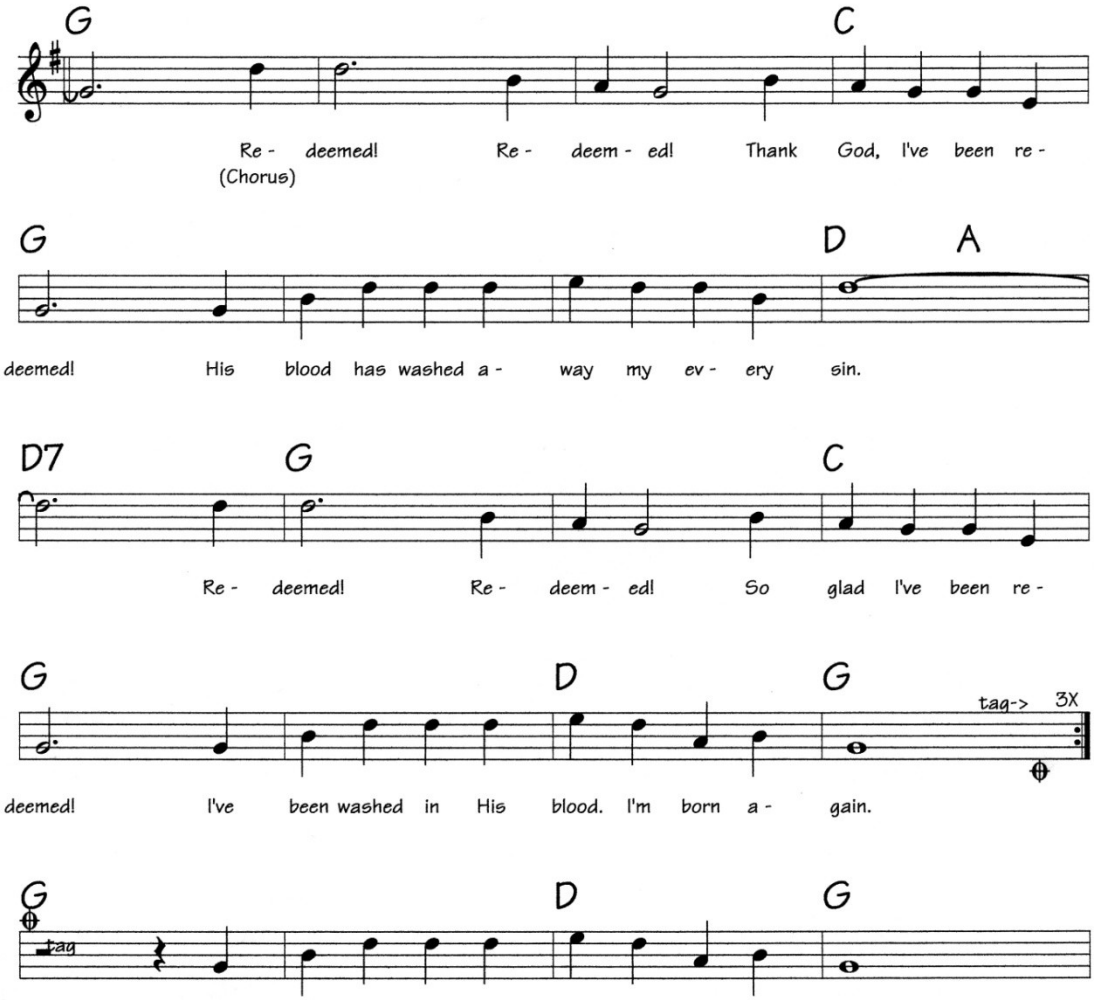
We're Going Over - Page 2

(Thank God I've Been) Redeemed!

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1997

Tempo = 145



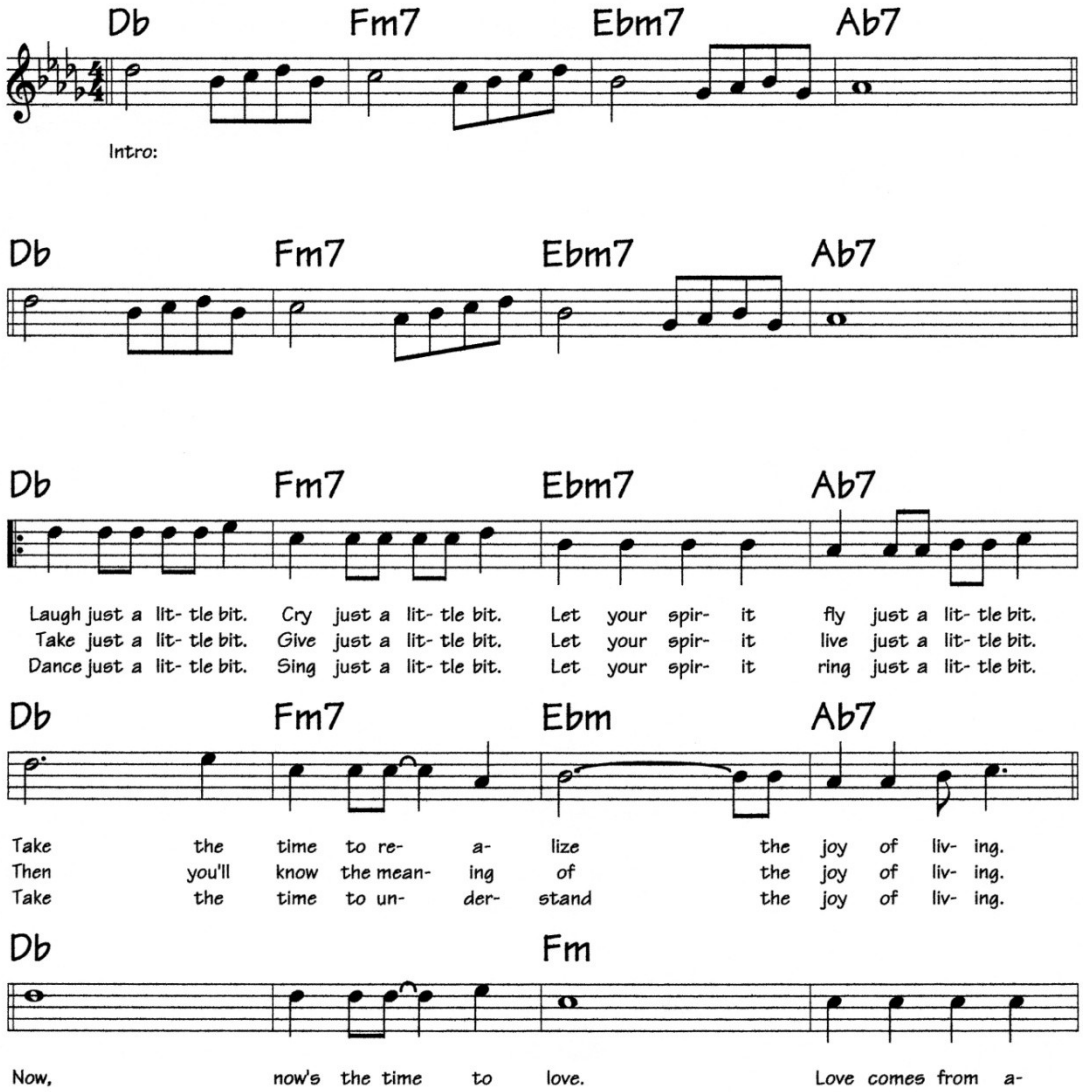


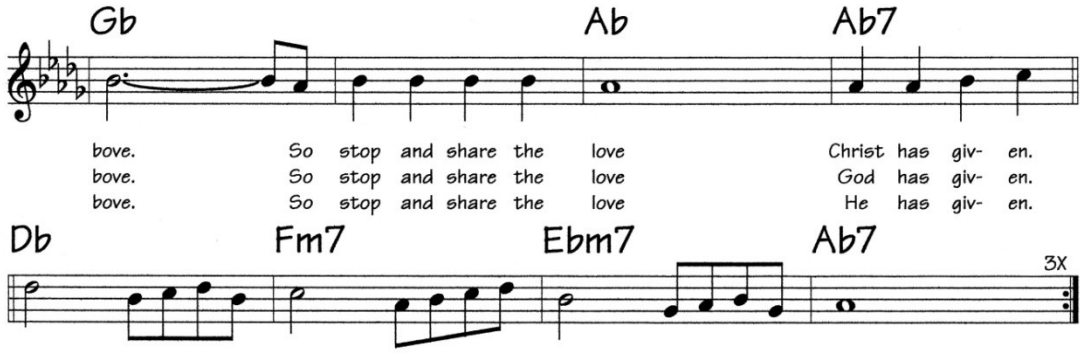
(Thank God I've Been) Redeemed! - Page 2

The Joy Of Living

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1982

Tempo = 115





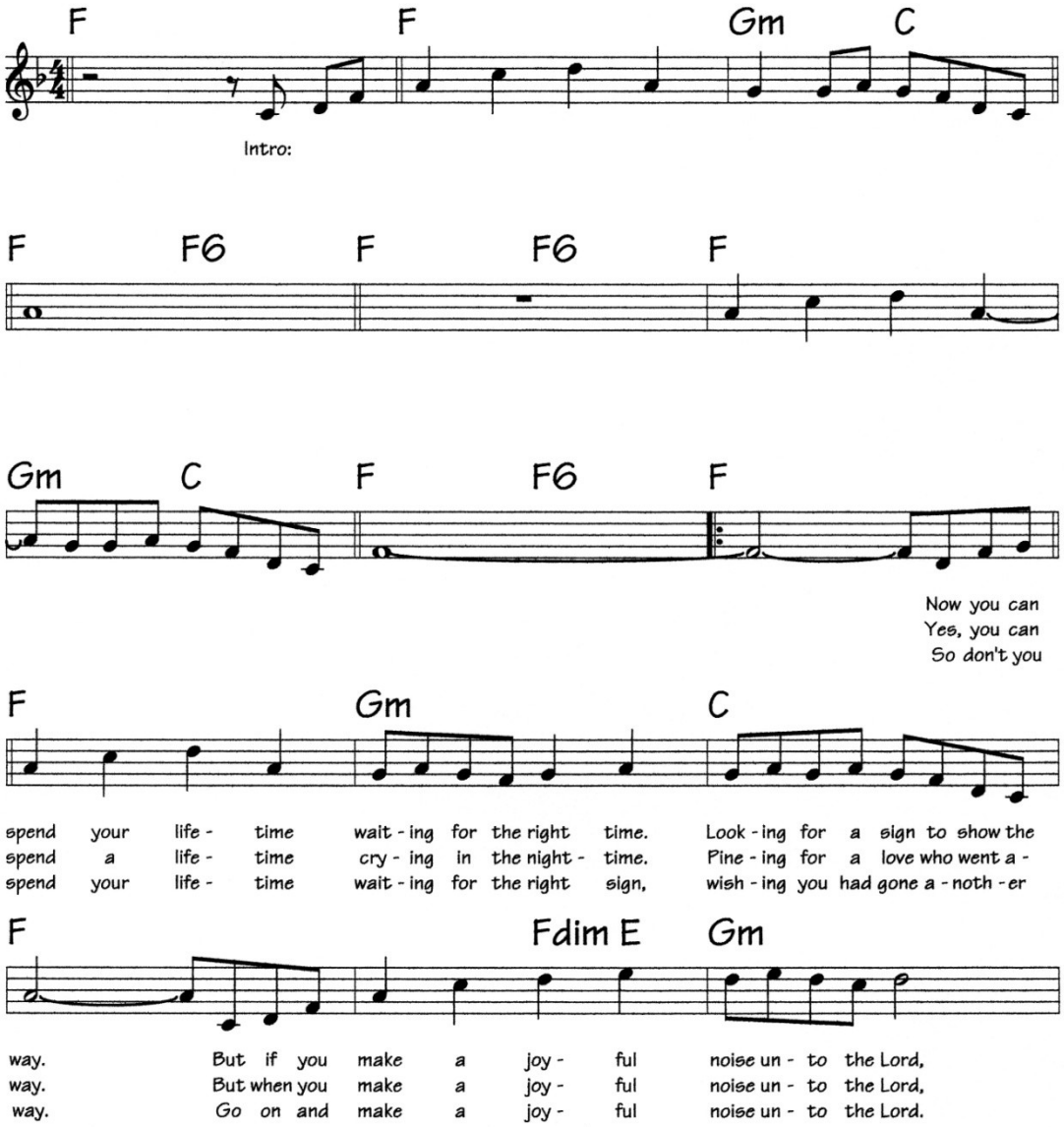
Interlude

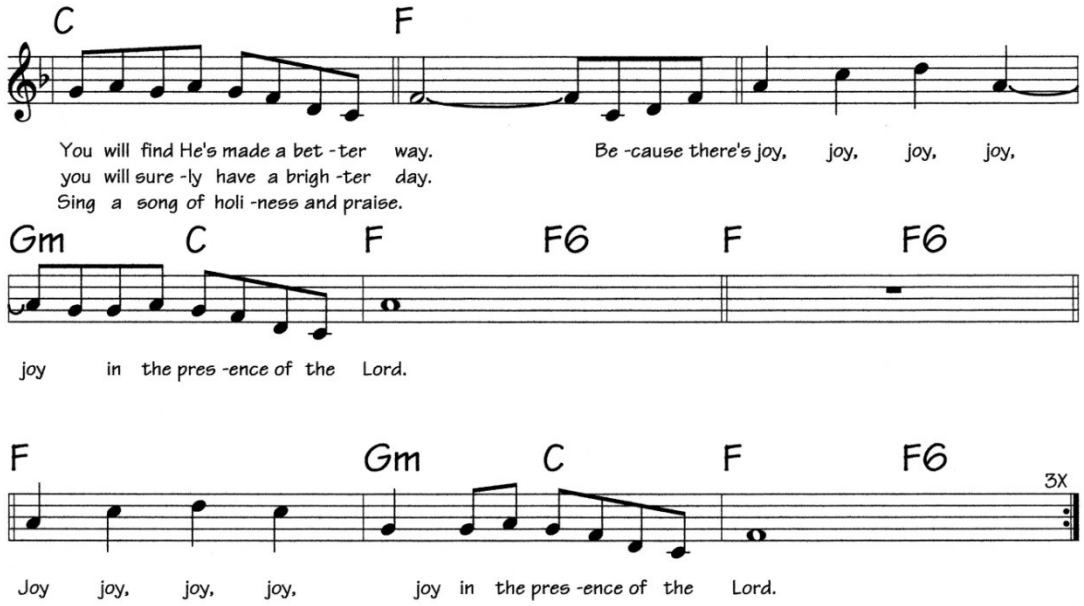
Fade to end

Joy In The Presence Of The Lord

By: Lyndell R. Martin
©1985

Tempo = 110



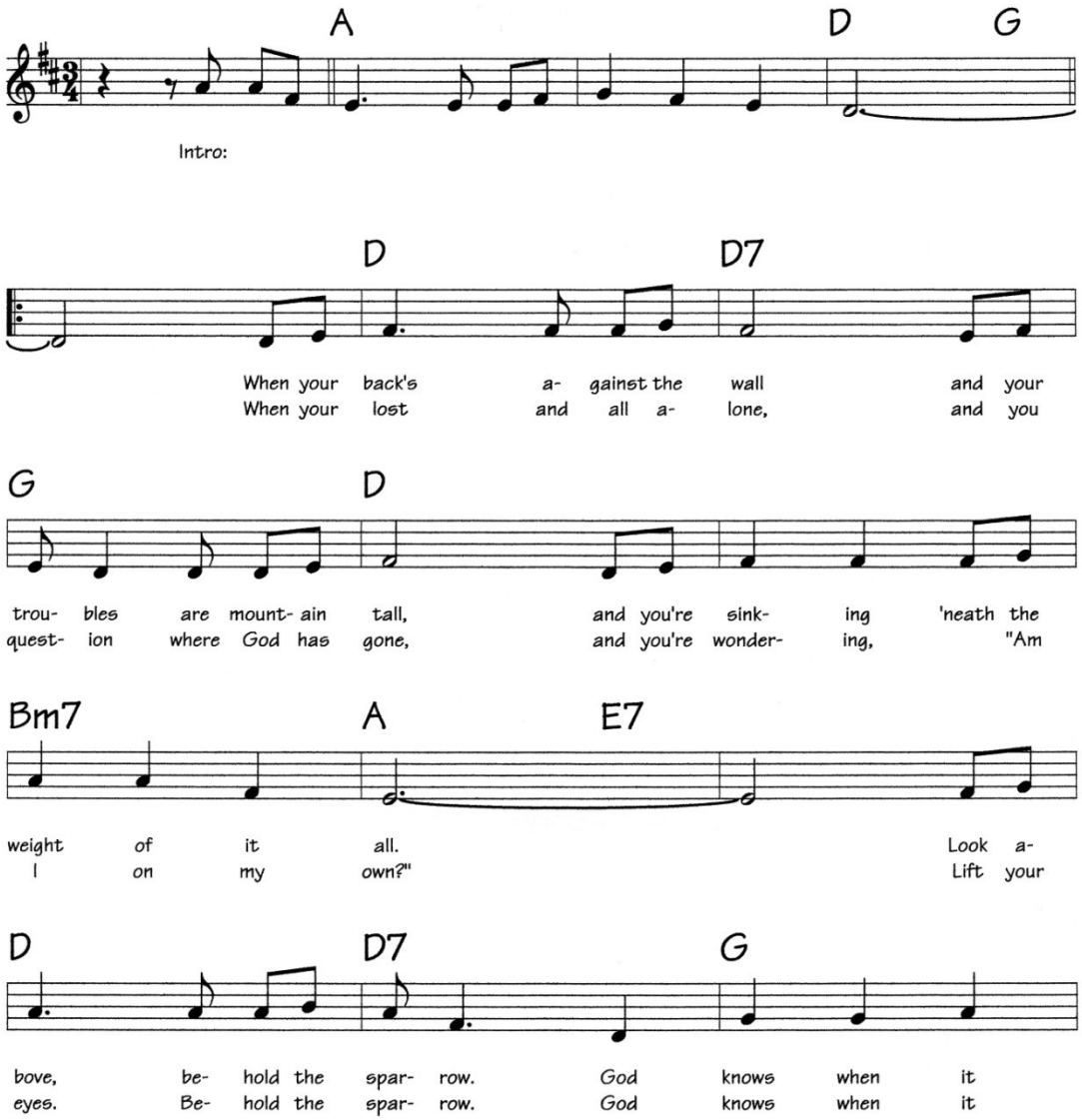


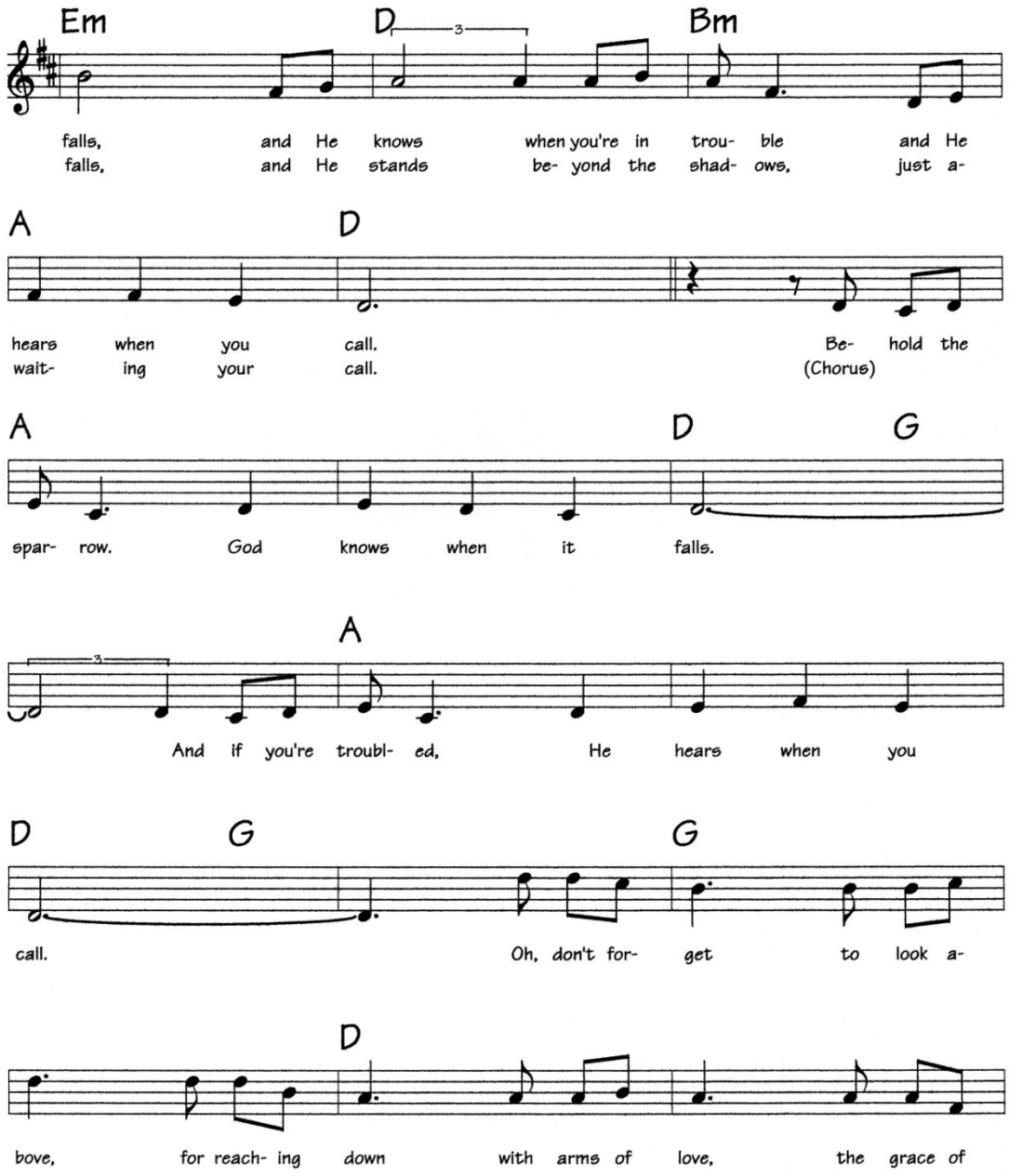
Joy In The Presence Of The Lord - Page 2

Behold The Sparrow

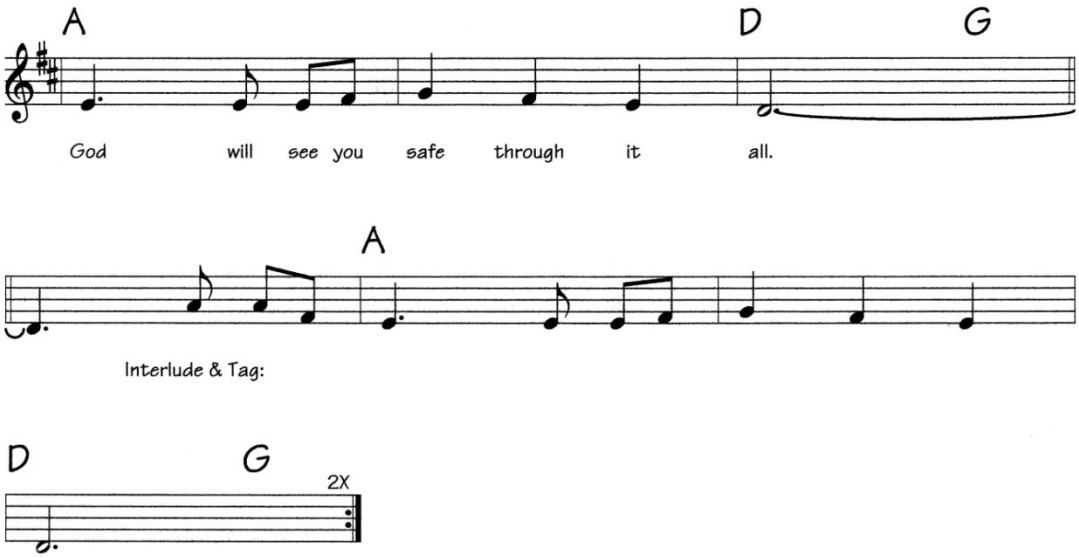
By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 2003

Tempo = 85





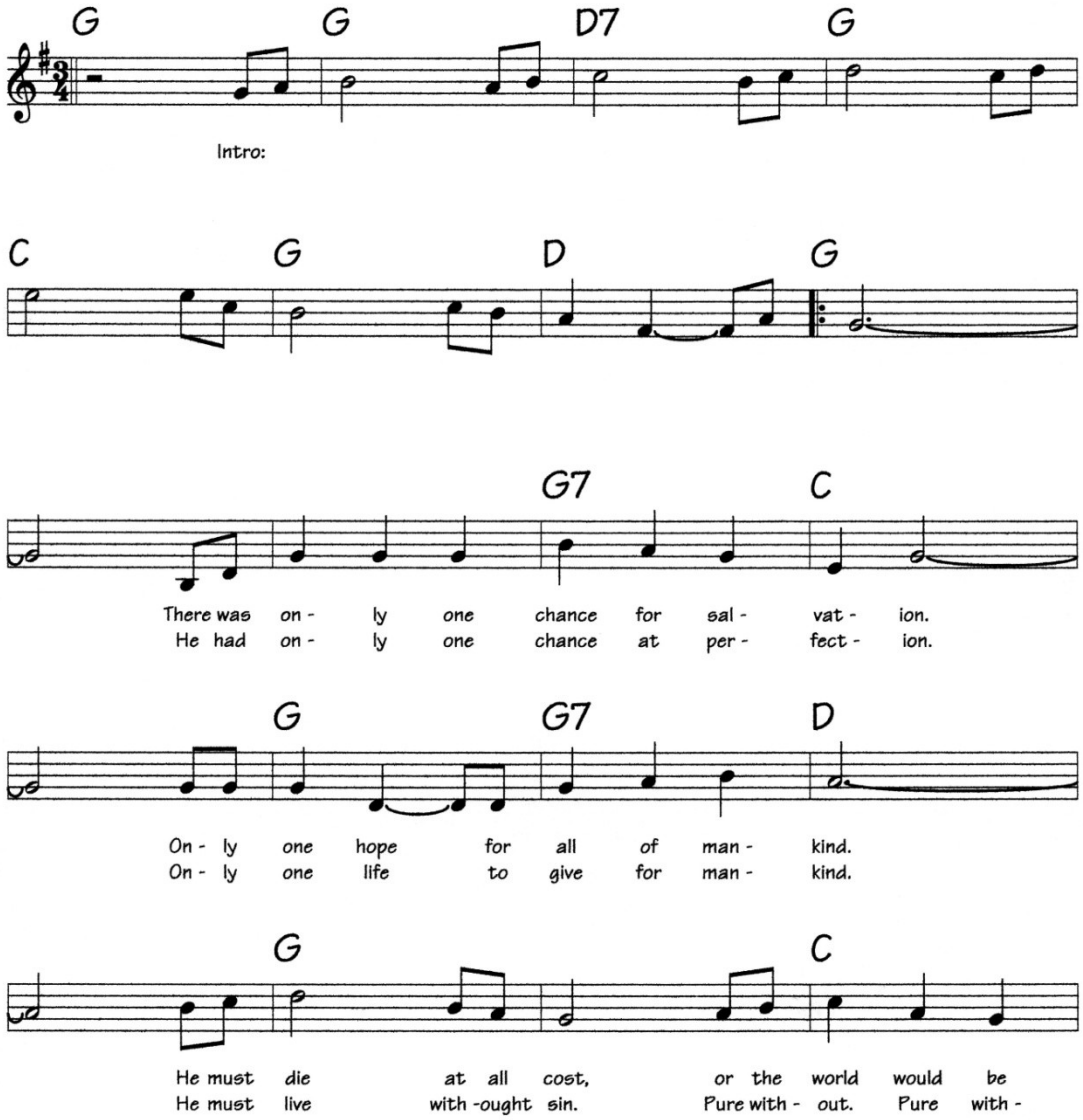
Behold The Sparrow - Page 2


A
D
G
God will see you safe through it all.
A
Interlude & Tag:
D
G
2X

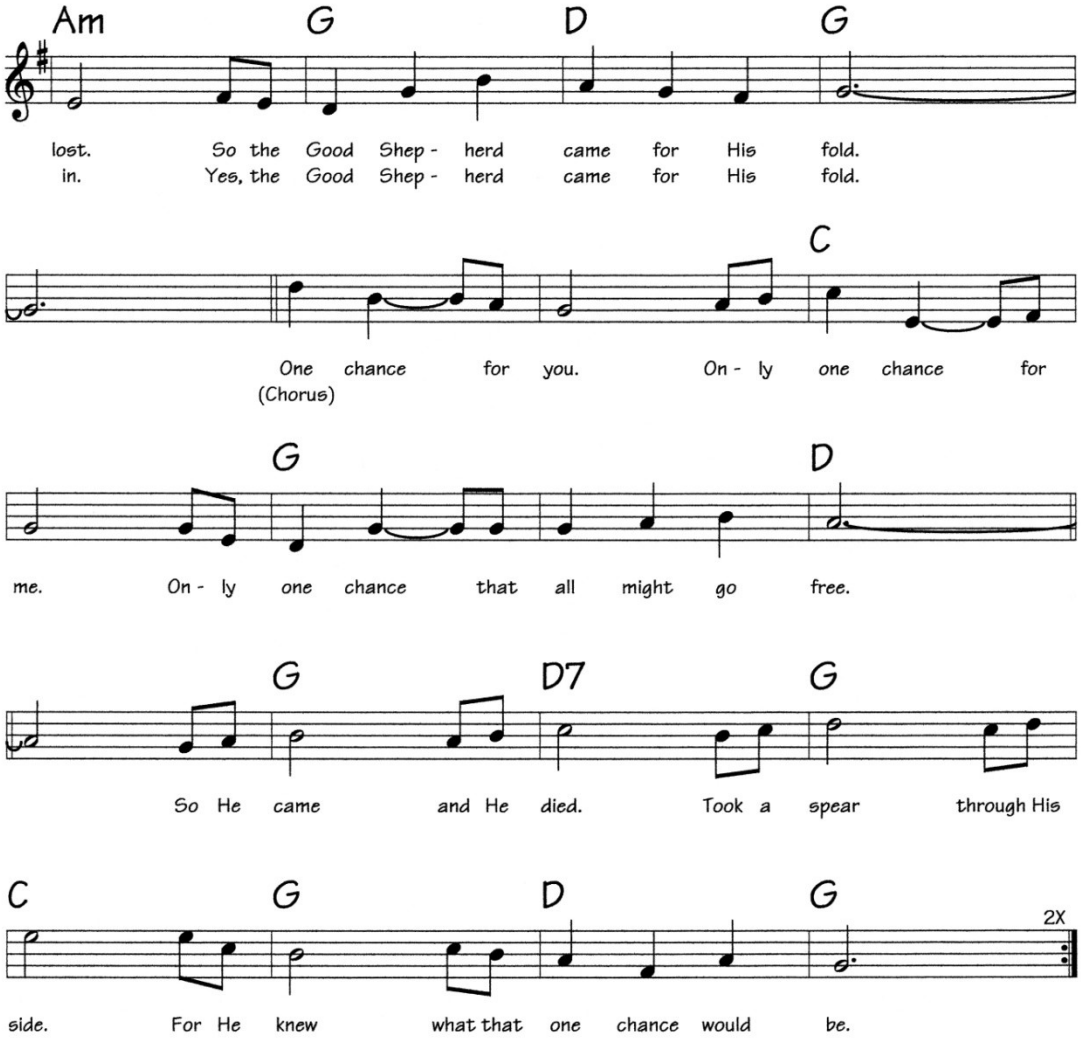
One Chance

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1996

Tempo = 110



© 1996

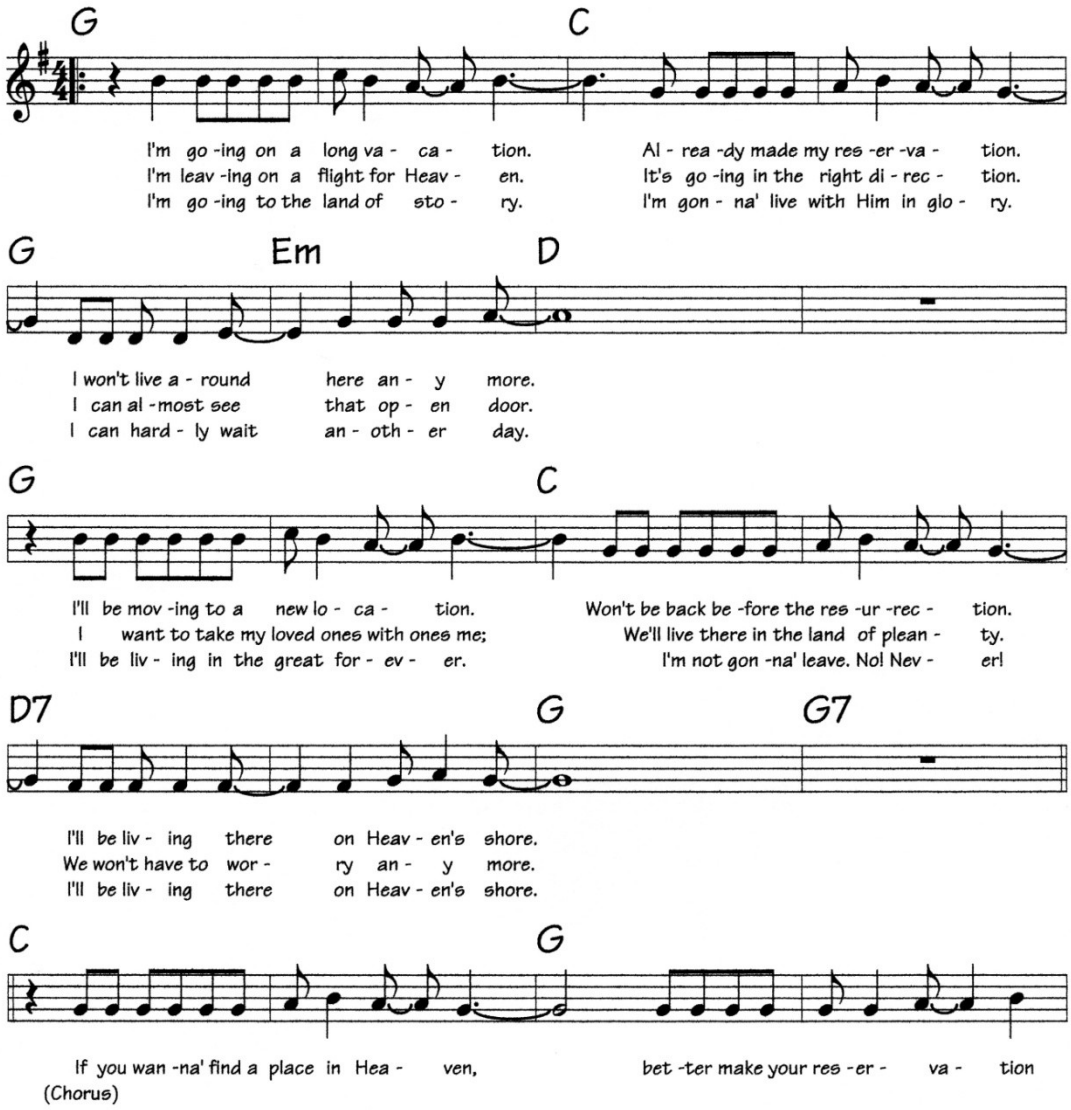


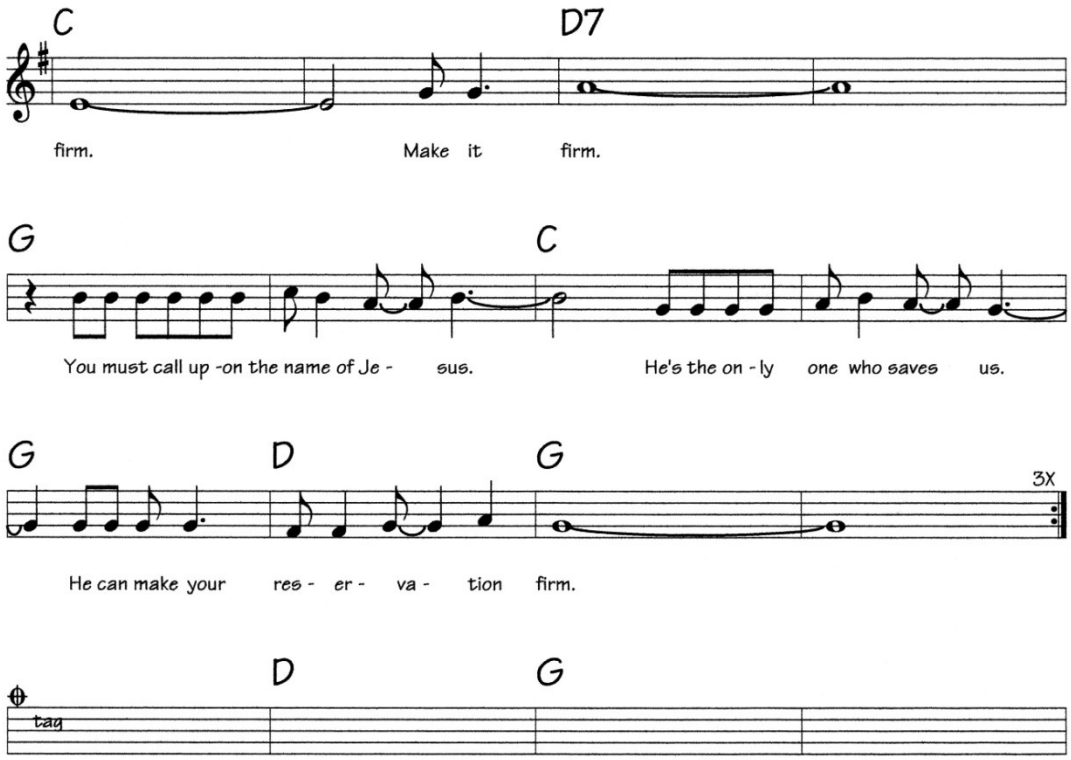
One Chance - Page 2

Make Your Reservation

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1988

Tempo = 130



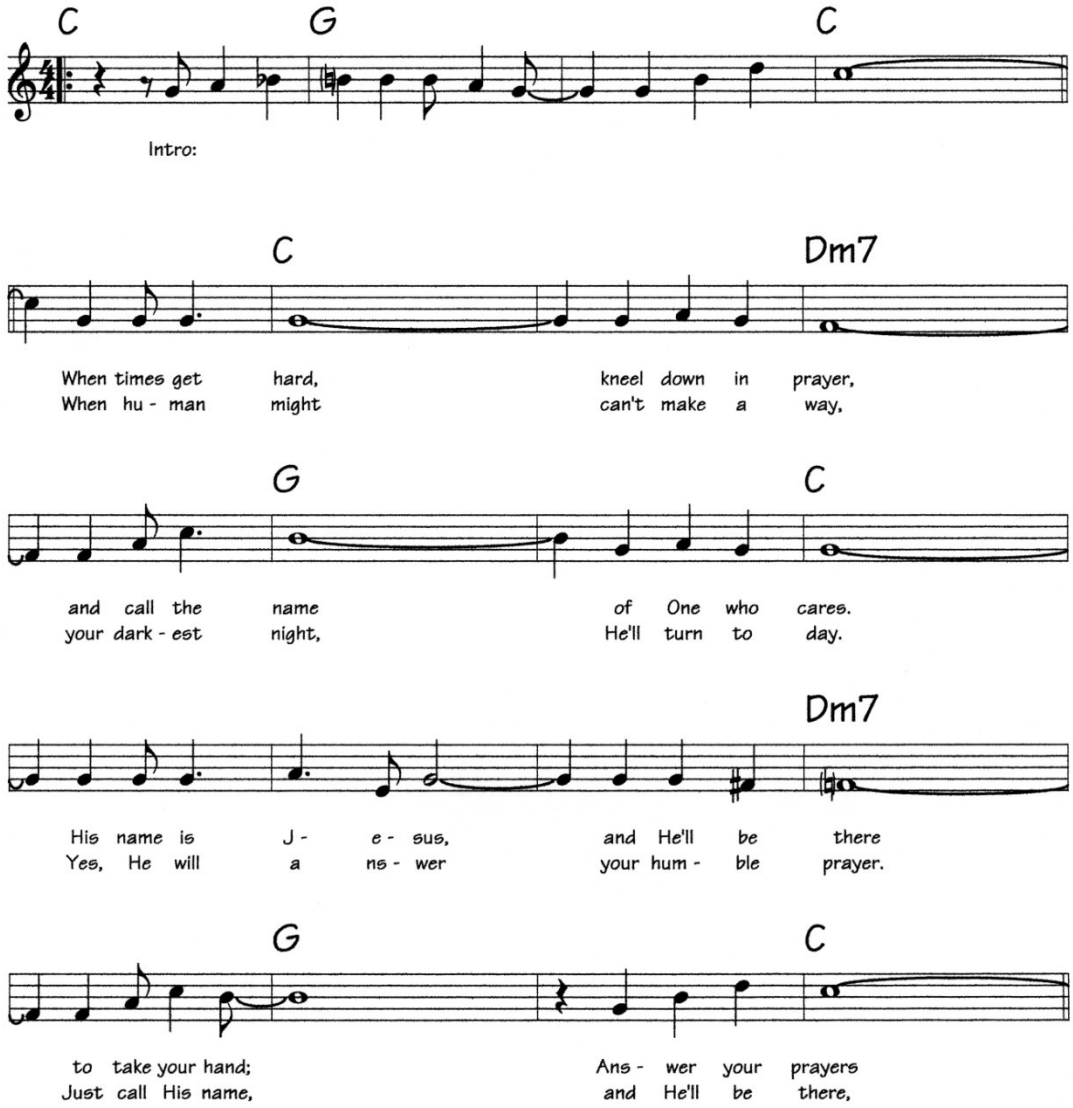


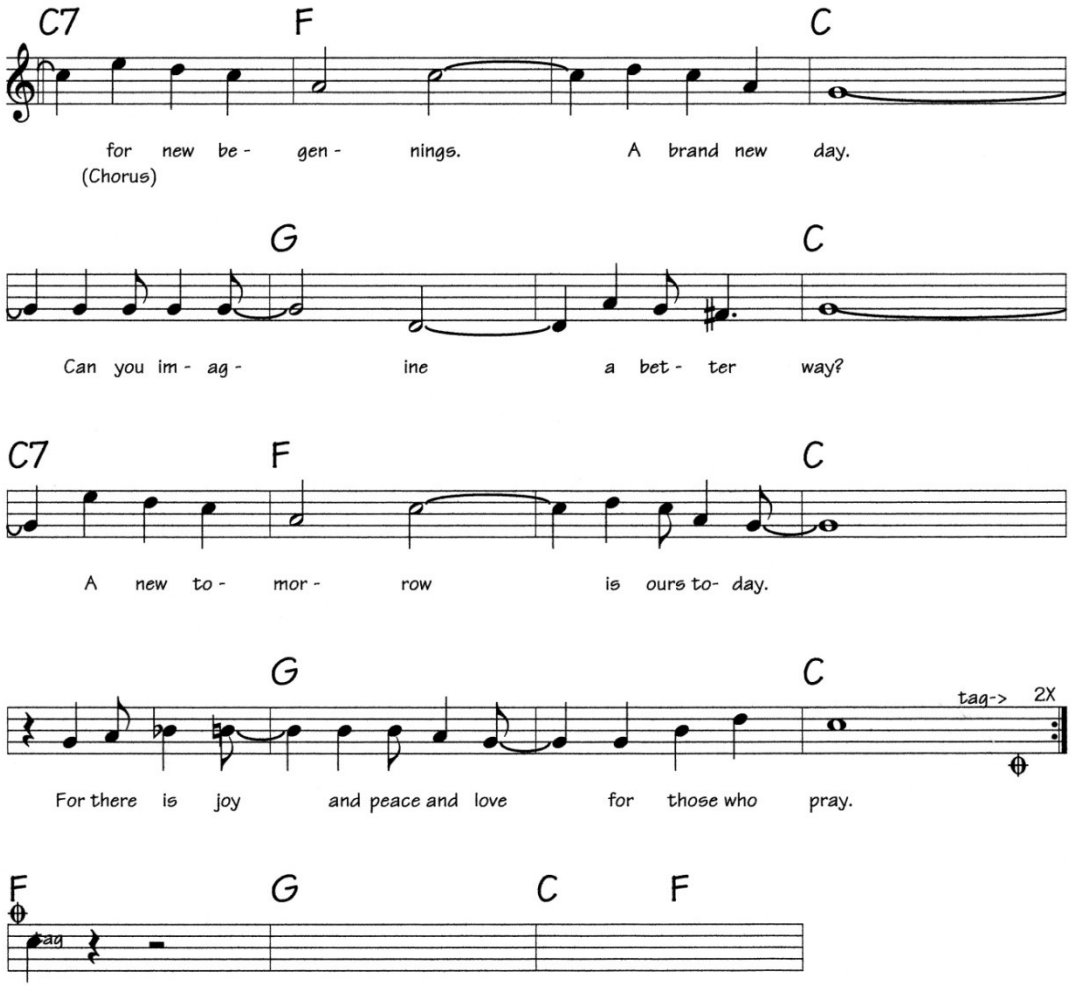
Make Your Reservation - Page 2

New Beginnings

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1988

Tempo = 130



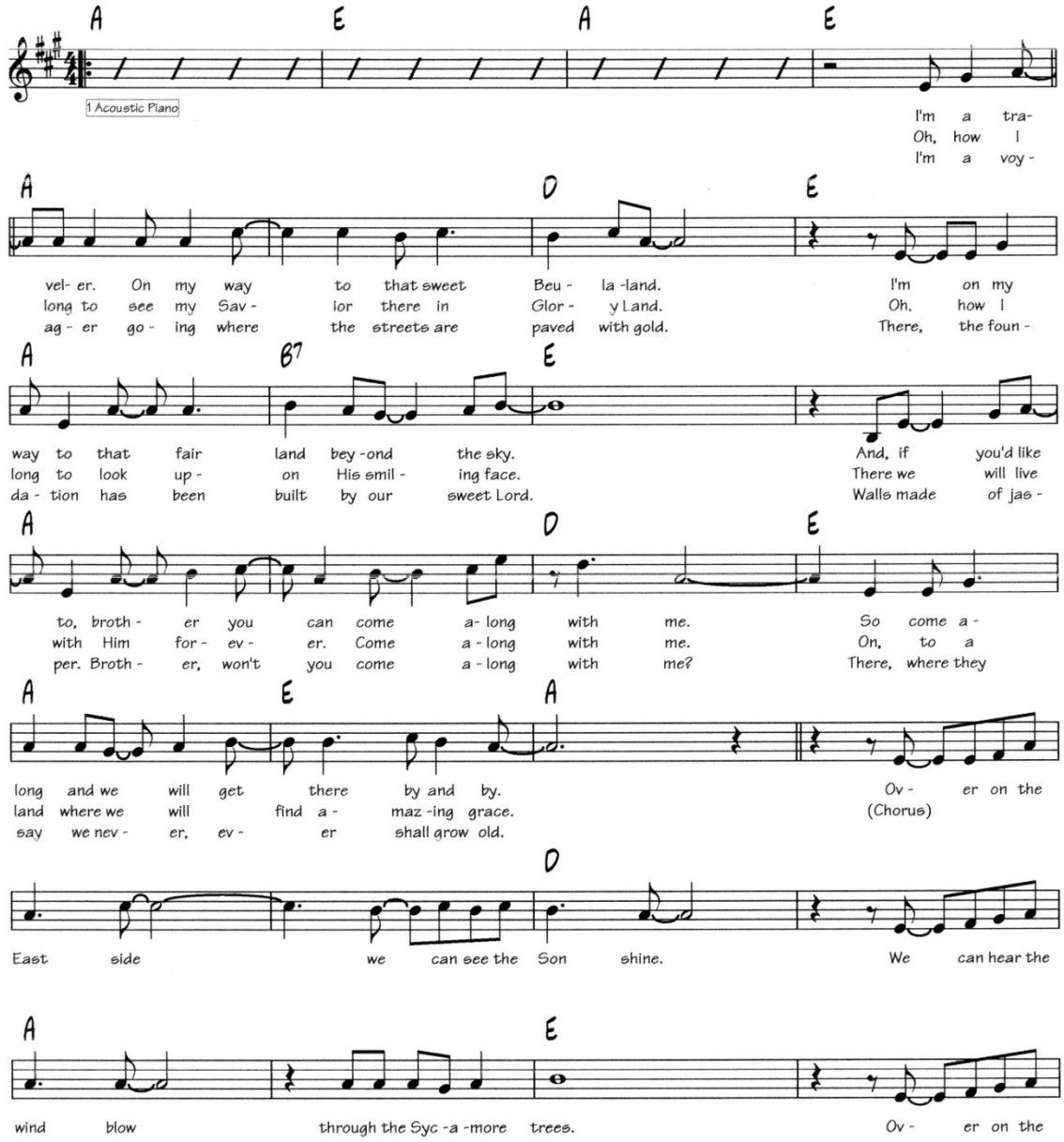


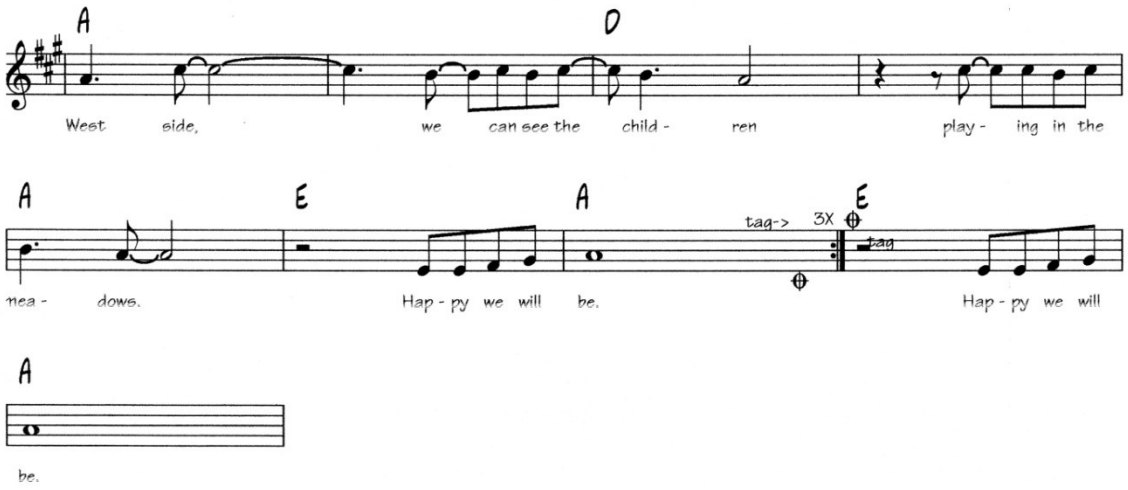
New Beginnings - Page 2

Happy We Will Be

Spirit - Praise & Worship Style
Tempo = 155

By: Lyndell R. Martin
©1983 Words & Music



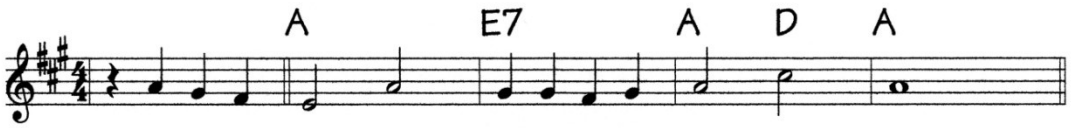


Happy We Will Be - Page 2

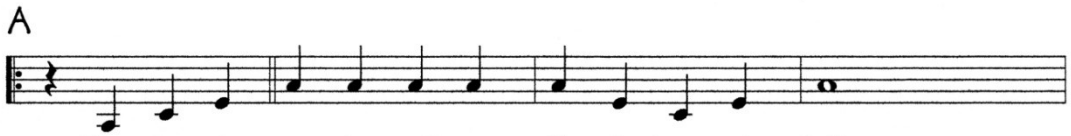
Where Have They Gone?

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1988

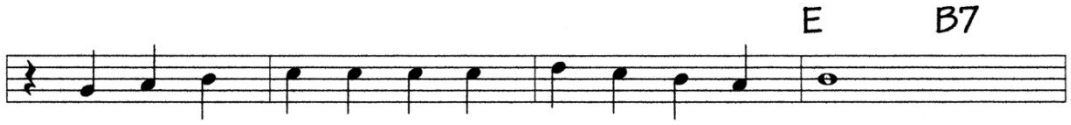
Tempo = 170



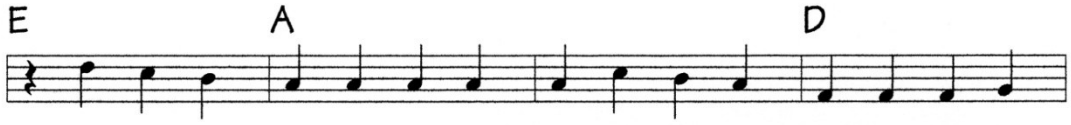
Intro:



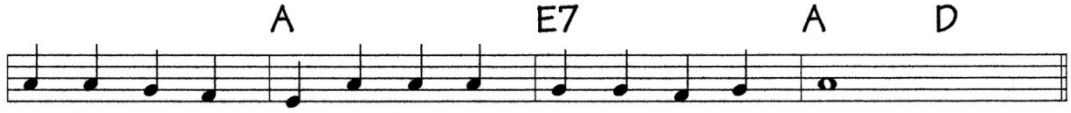
Where is the joy that used to fill the house of God?
Where is the love that used to fill the house of God?
Where is the faith that used to fill the house of God?



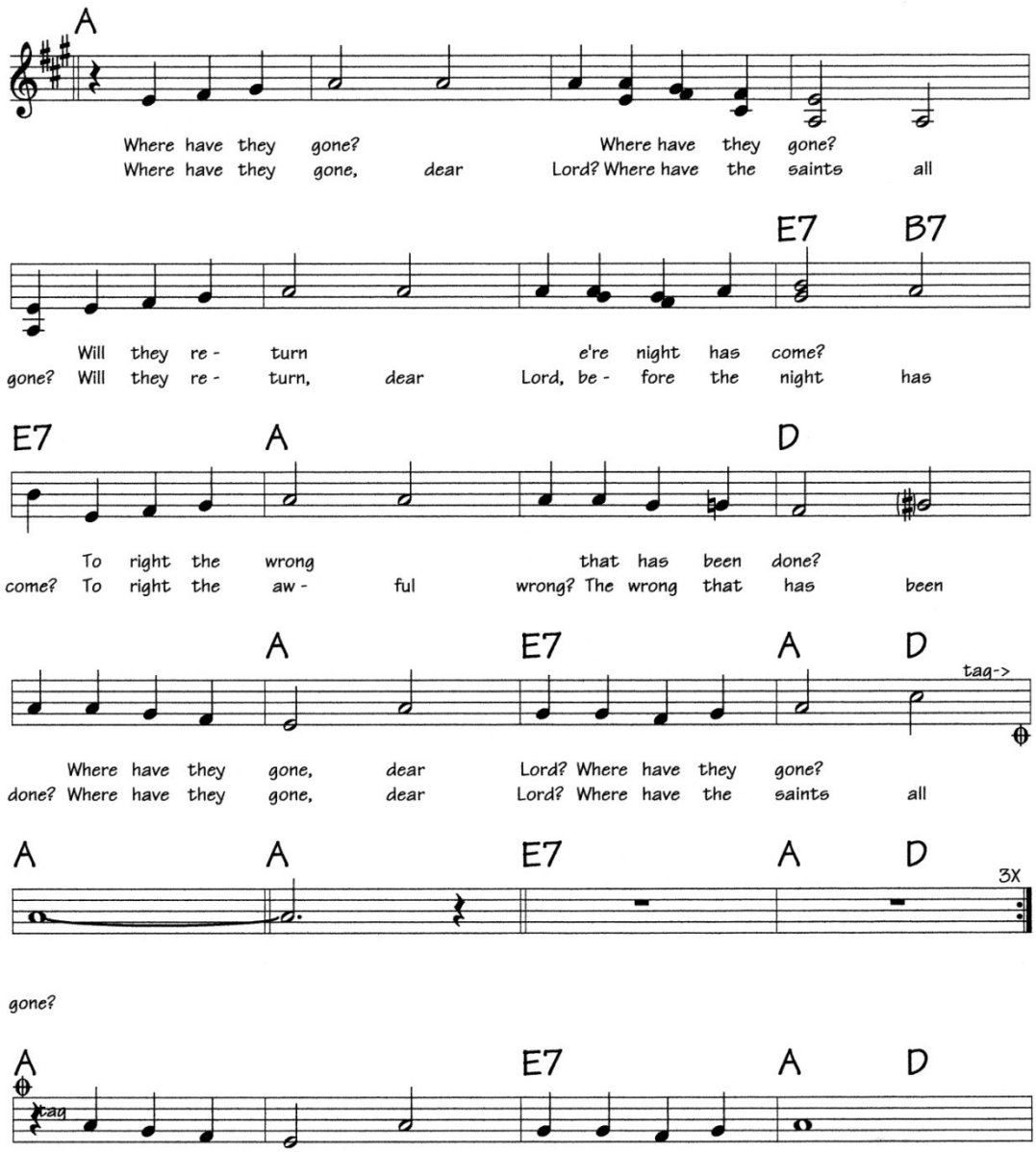
Where are the saints who used to shout and praise the Lord?
Where are the saints who used to tread this bar - ren sod?
Where are the saints who used to fear His chasten - ing rod?



Where are the ring - ing hal - le - lu - jahs and the shouts of vic - to -
Where is the smil - ing and the hug - ging and the shak - ing of the
Where is the cry - ing of the new born Christ - ian as he meets the



ry? Where is the joy that used to fill the house of God?
hands? Where is the love that used to fill the house of God?
Lord? Where is the faith that used to fill the house of God?

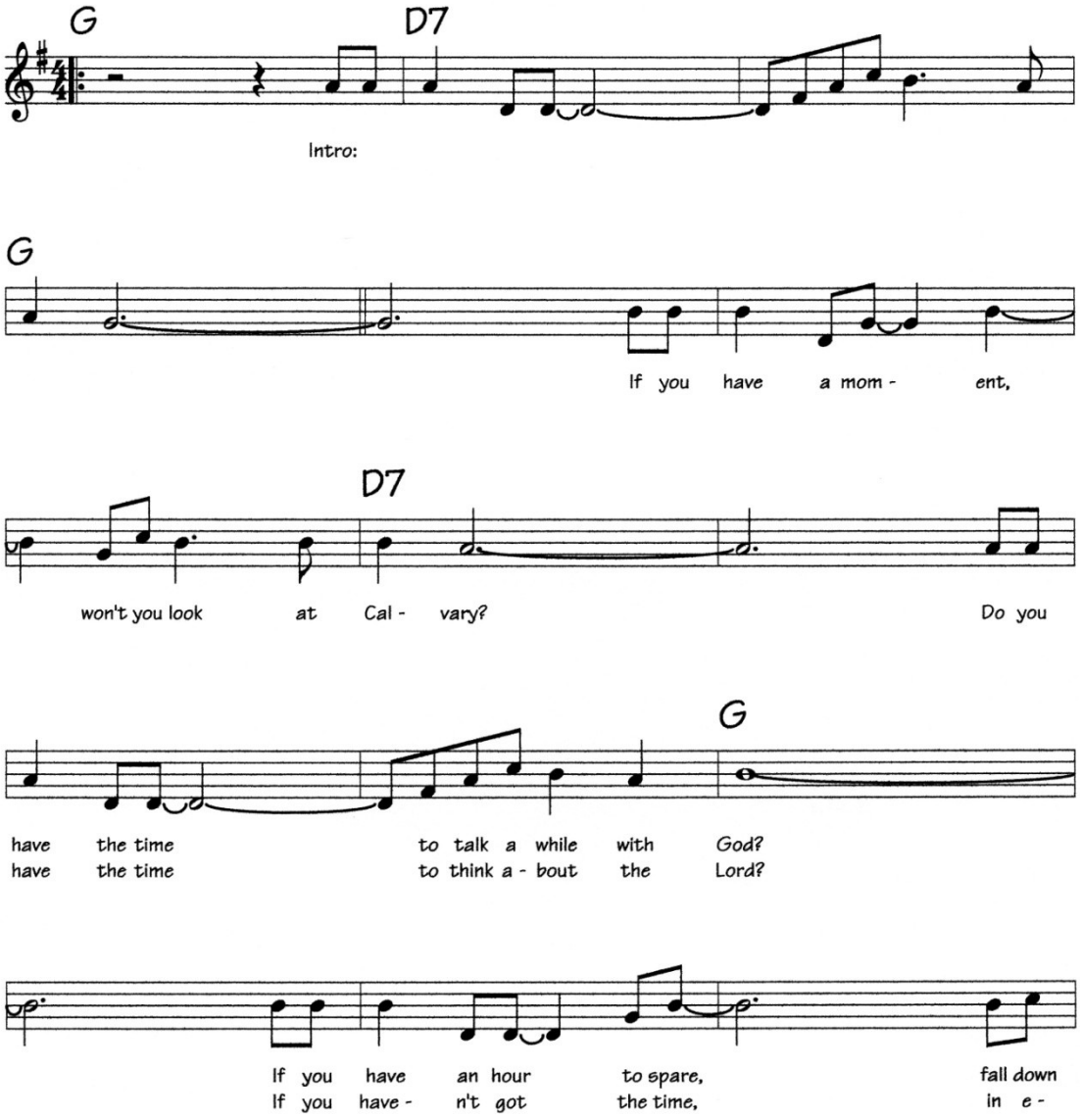


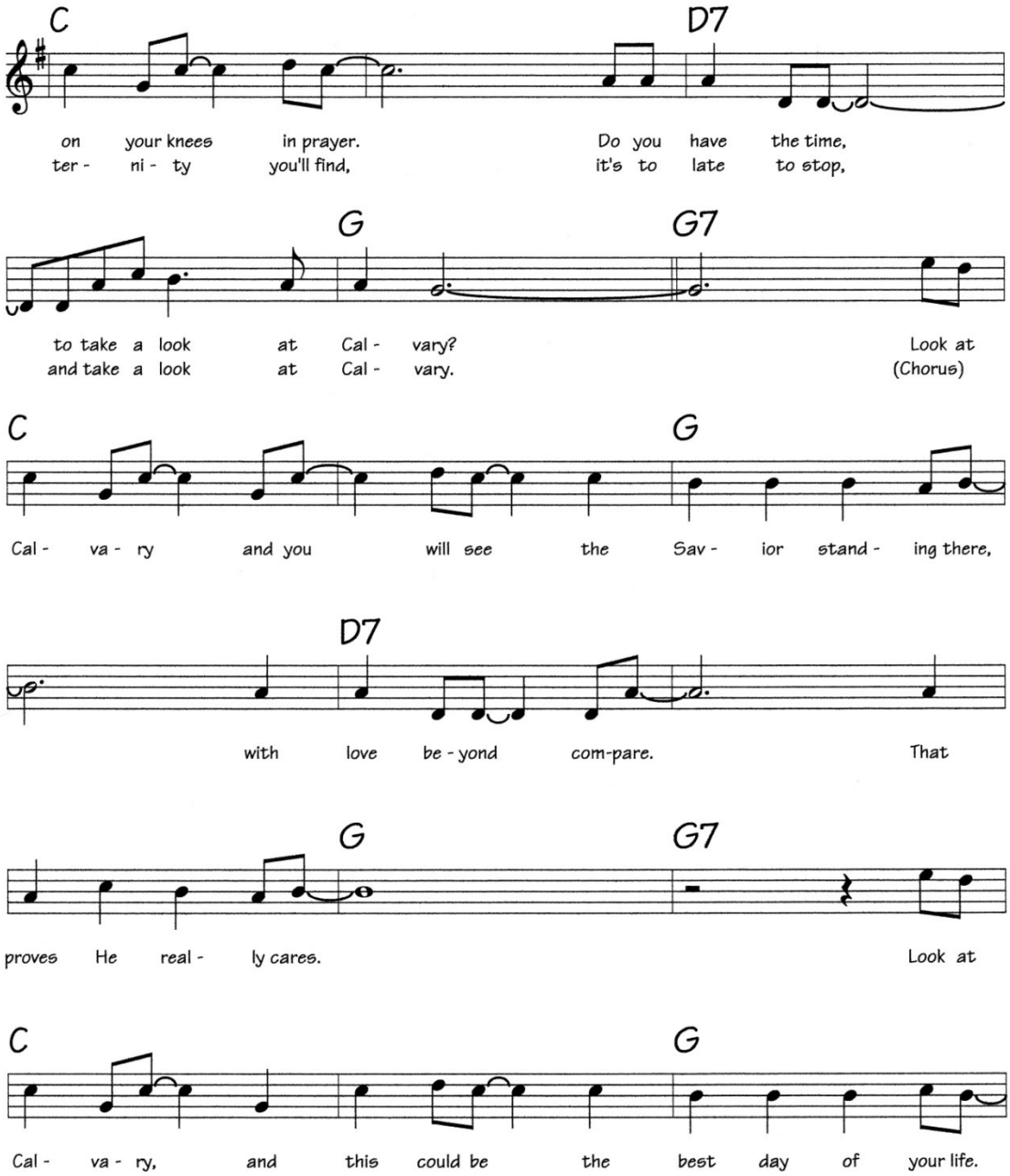
Where Have They Gone? - Page 2

Look At Calvary

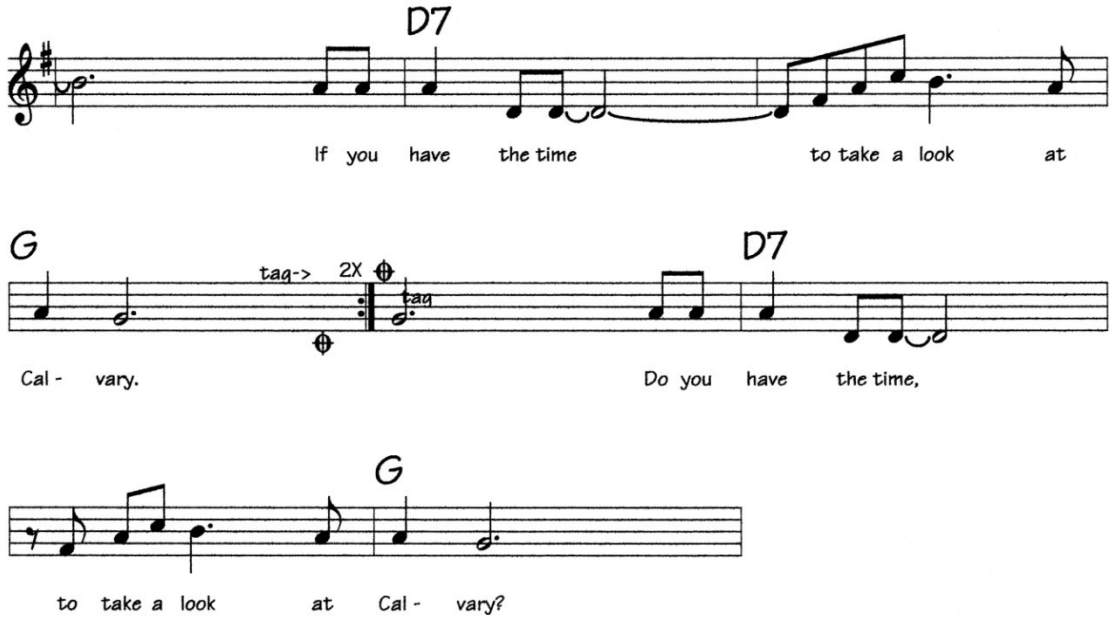
By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1991

Tempo = 117





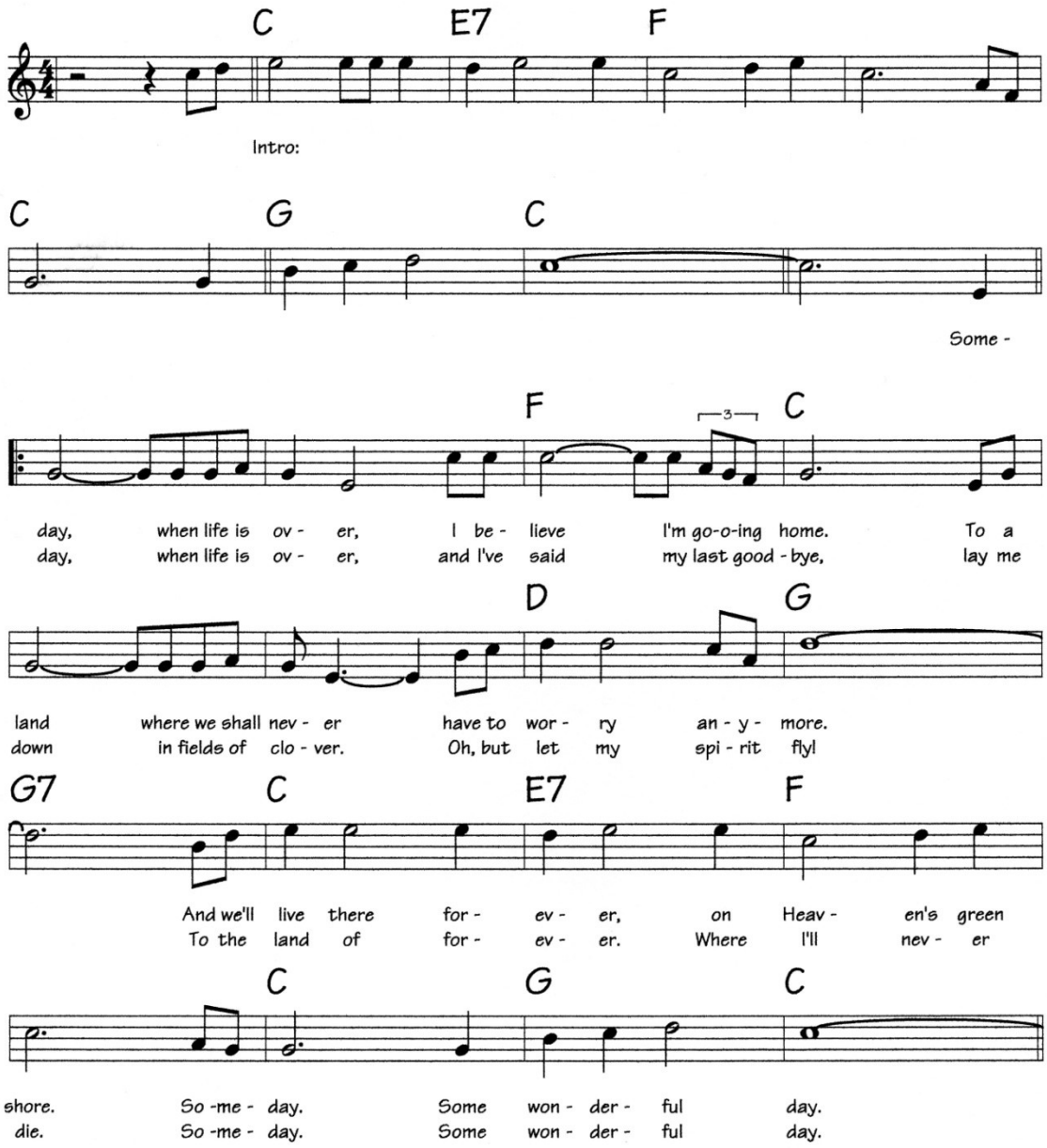
Look At Calvary - Page 2

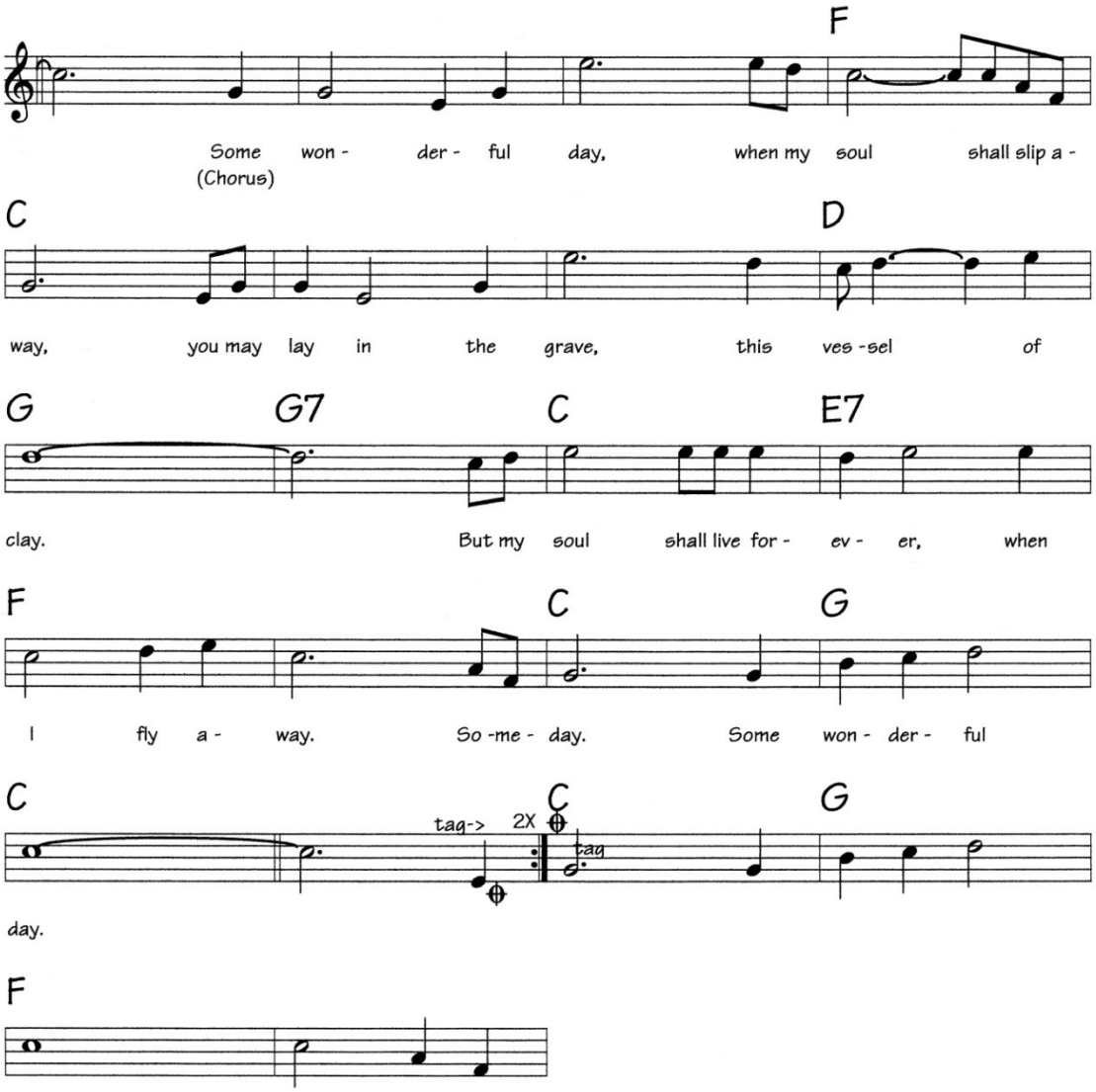


Look At Calvary - Page 3

Someday

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1989



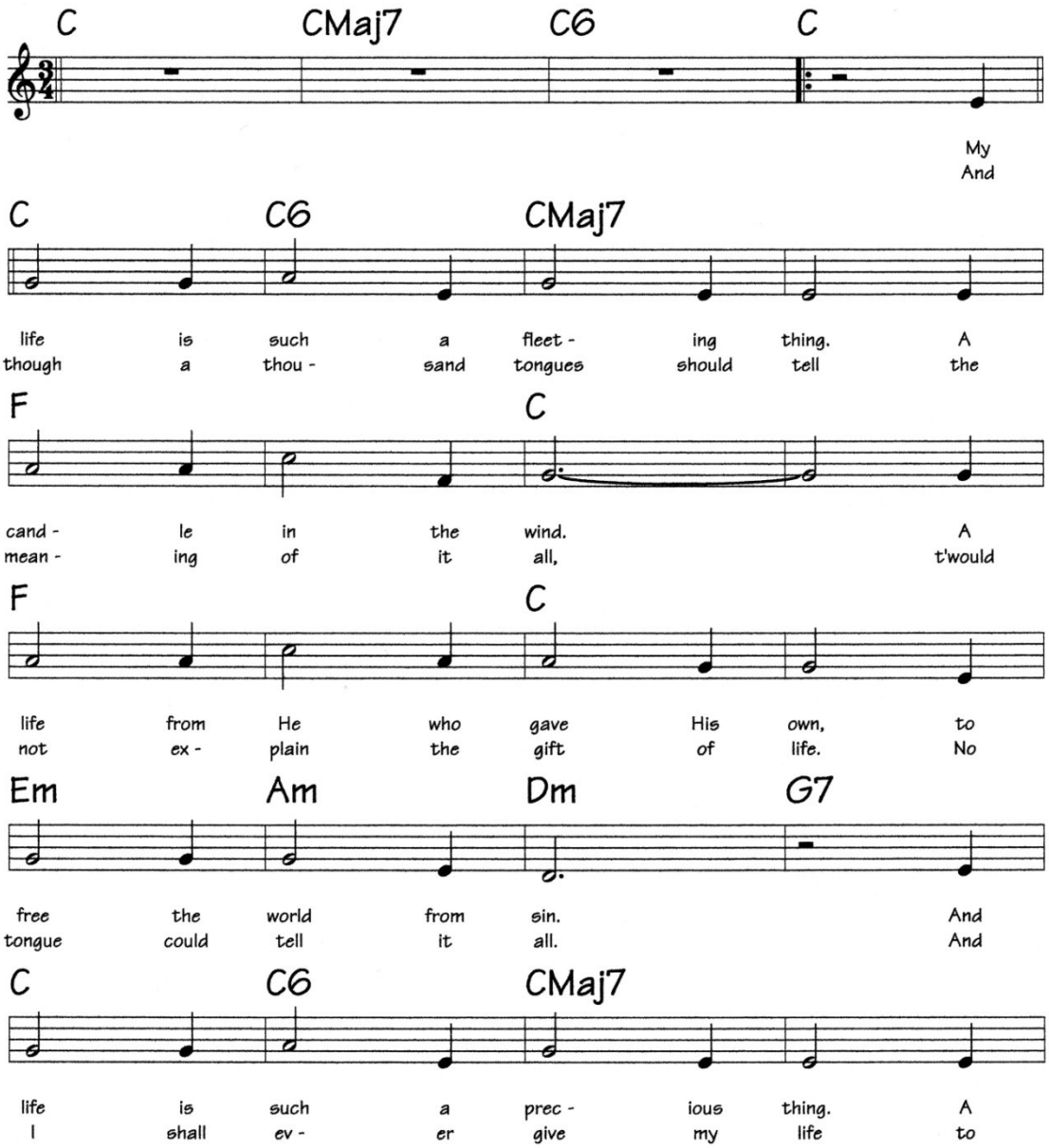


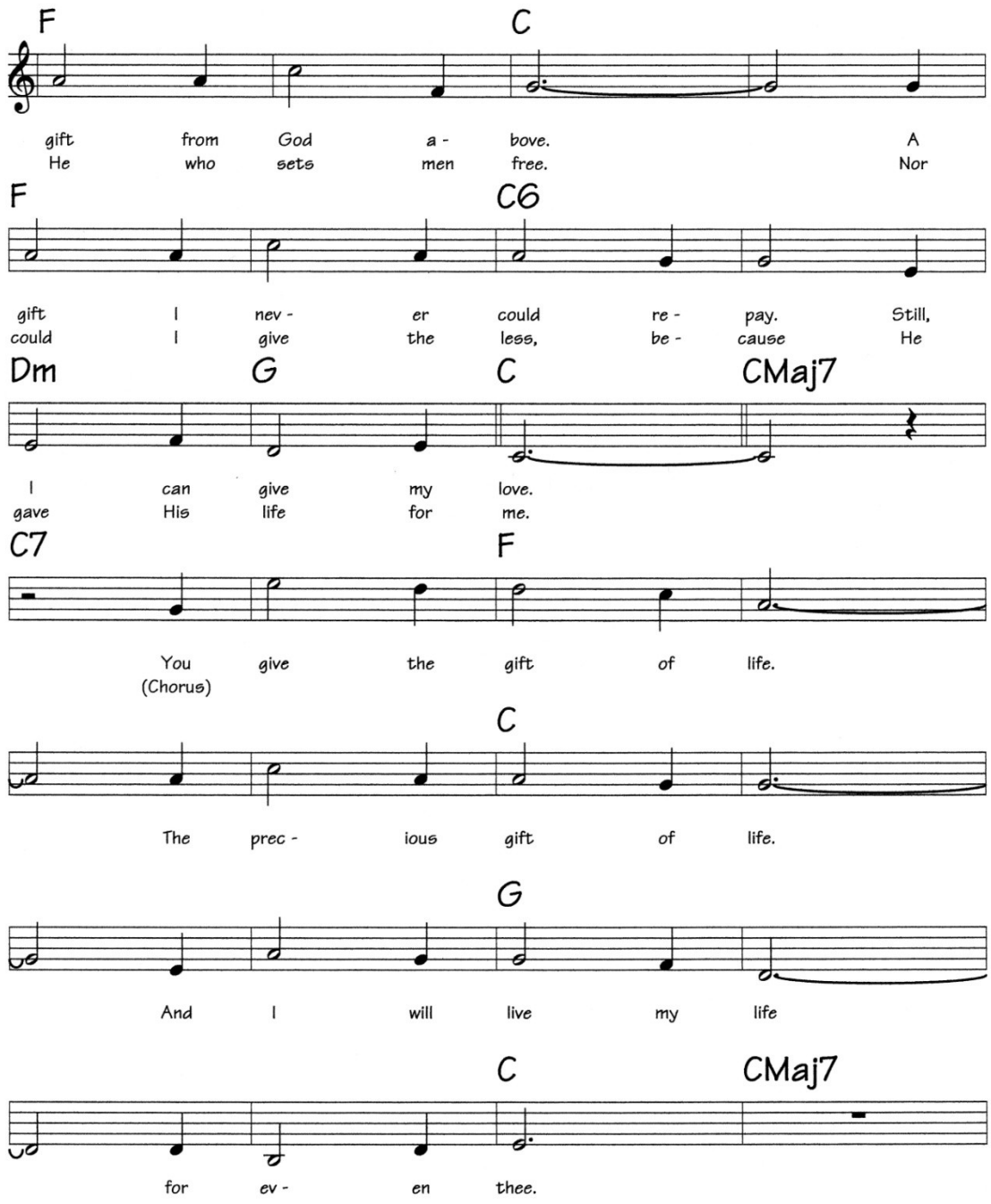
Someday - Page 2

The Gift Of Life

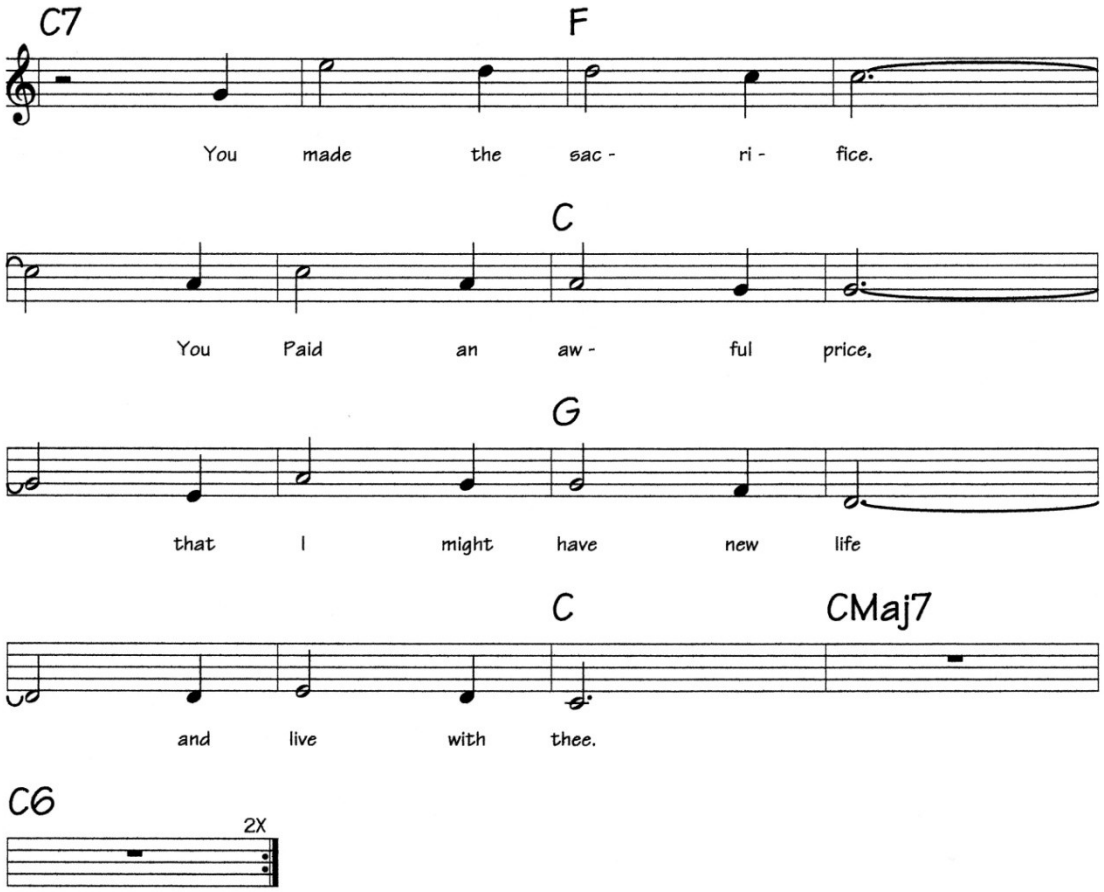
By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1988

Tempo = 110





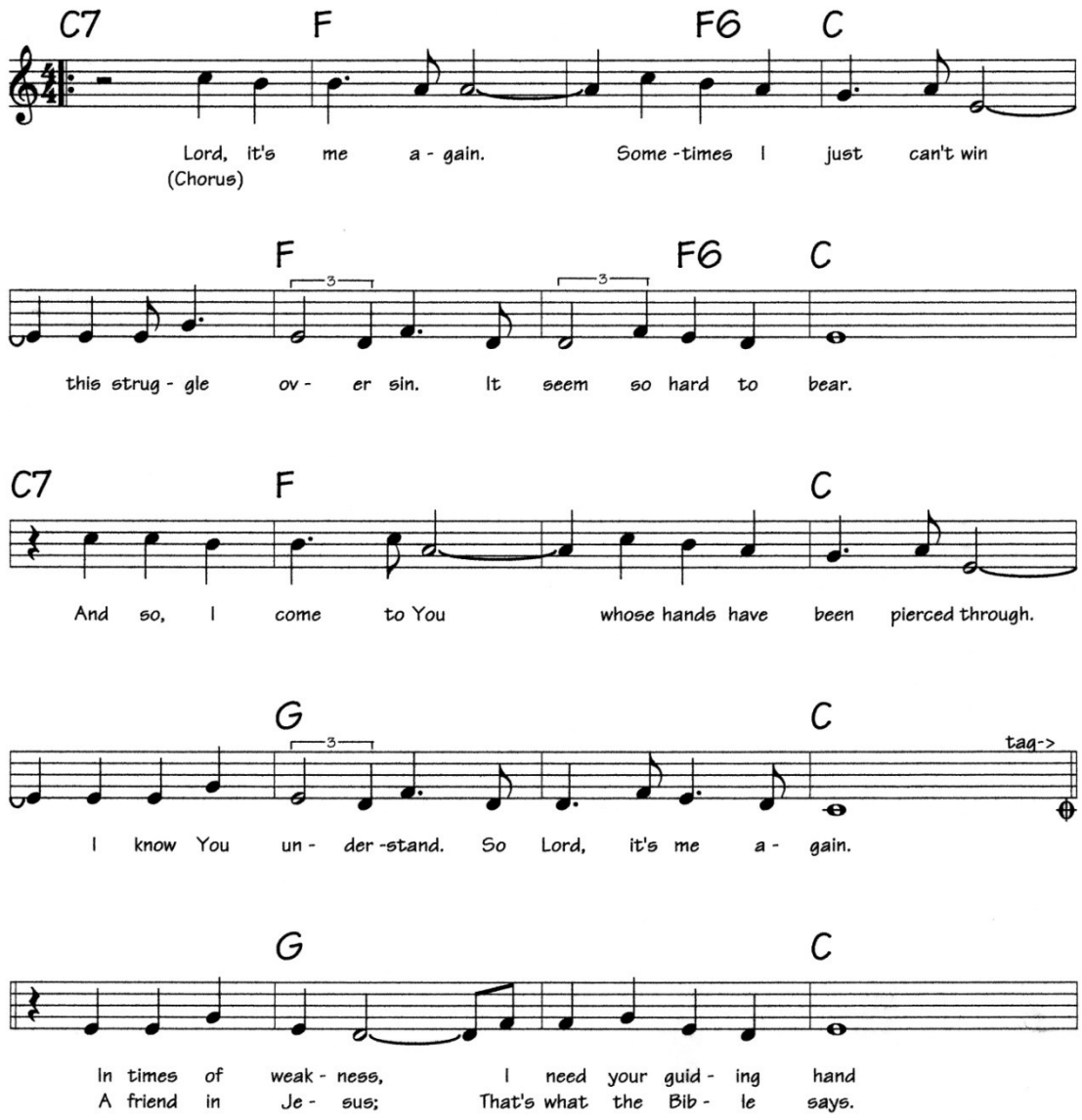
The Gift Of Life - Page 2


C7
F
You made the sac - ri - fice.
C
You Paid an aw - ful price,
G
that I might have new life
C
CMaj7
and live with thee.
C6
2X

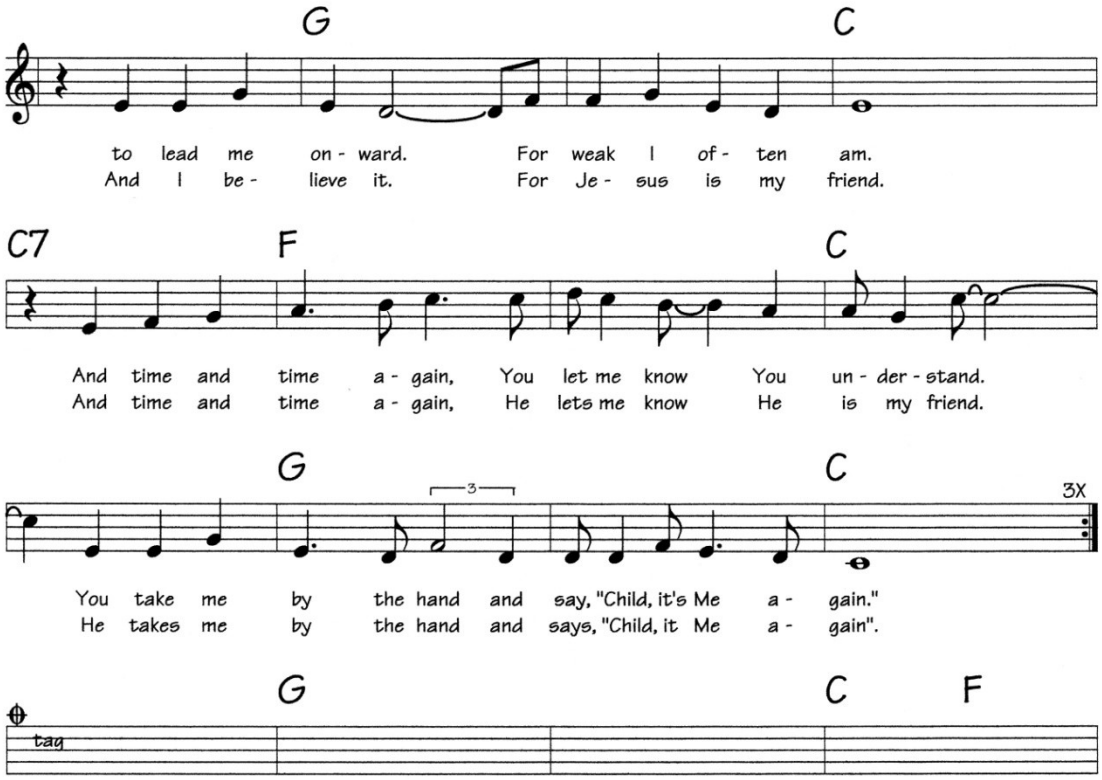
Lord, It's Me Again

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1982

Tempo = 90



© 1982

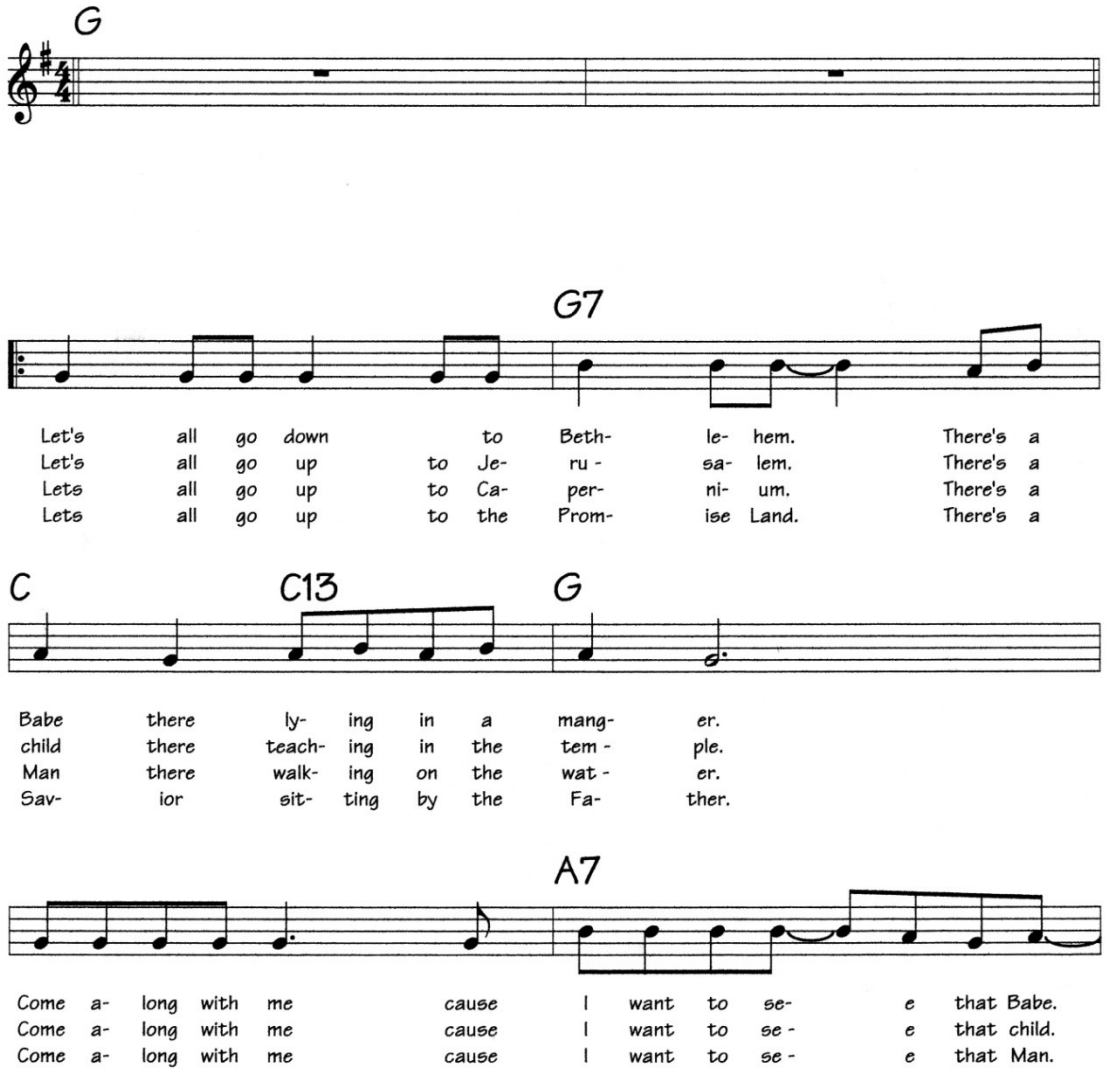


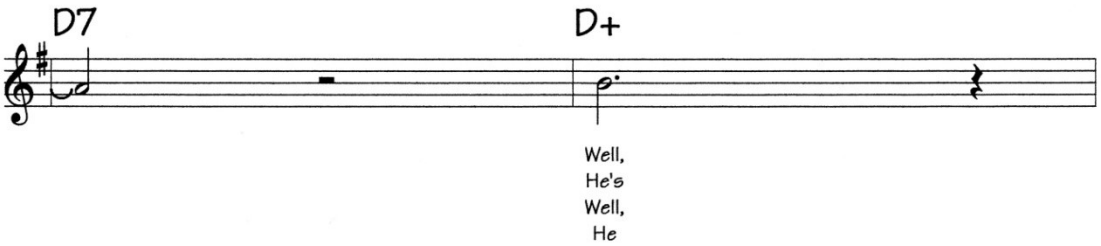
Lord, It's Me Again - Page 2

Come Along With Me

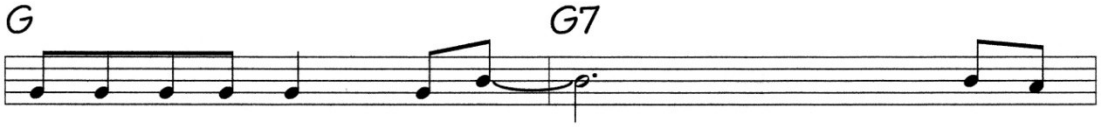
By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1981

Tempo = 125

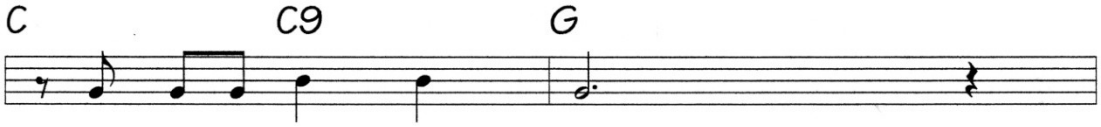




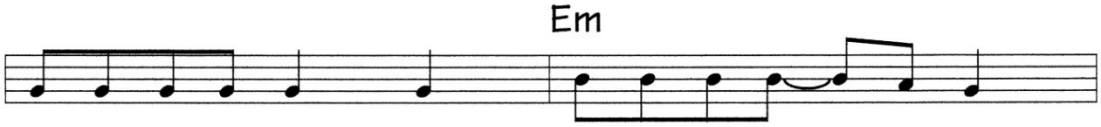
Well,
He's
Well,
He



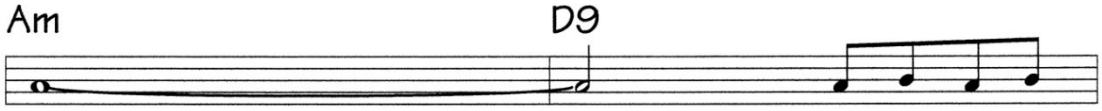
He's the Son Of God, they say. He's come
ask- ing all a- bout their laws and teach-
He can calm the rag- ing sea, raise the
died to take a- way our sins. Laid His



to take our sins a - way.
ing them a- bout the fall.
dead and cause the blind to see.
life down and took it up a- gain.

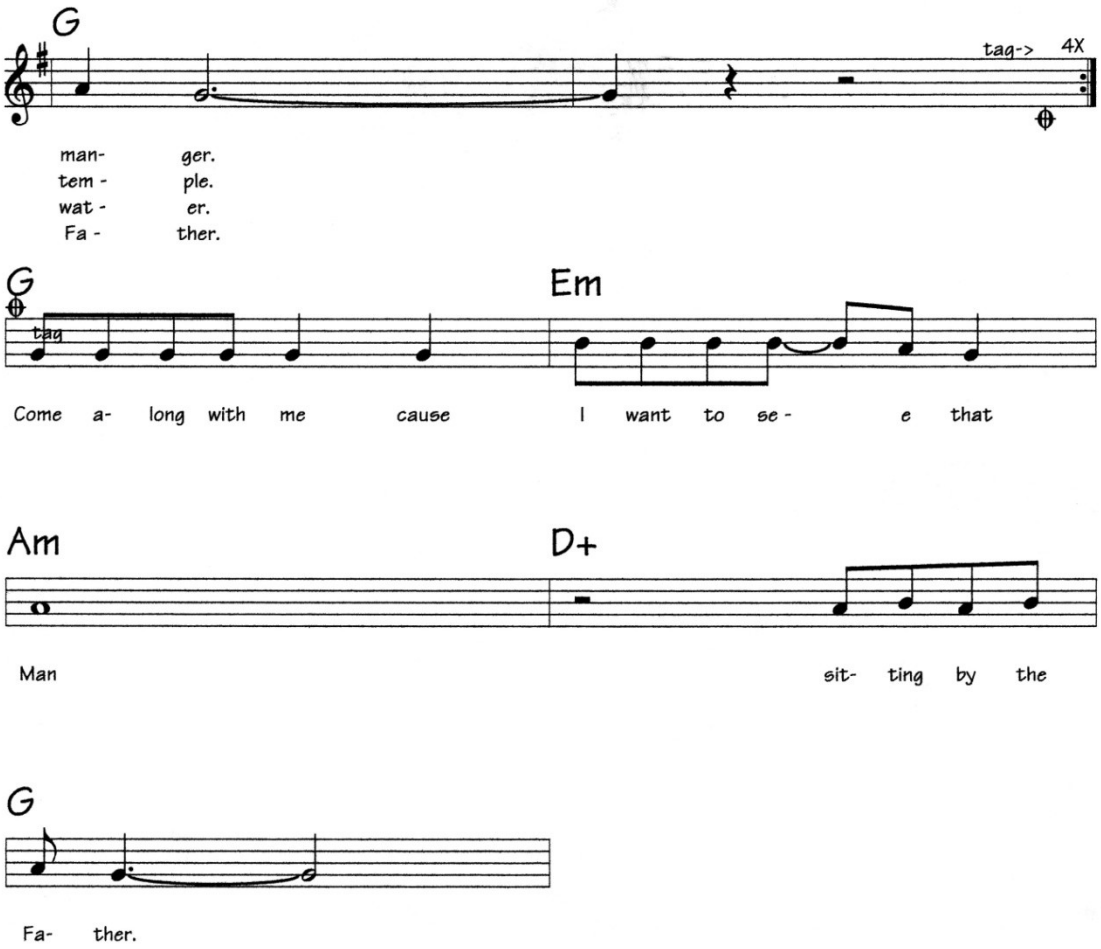


Come a- long with me, cause I want to se - e that
Come a- long with me cause I want to se - e that
Com a- long with me cause I want to se - e that
Come a- long with me cause I want to se - e that



Babe lay- ing in a
Child teach- ing in the
Man walk- ing on the
Man sit- ting by the

Come Along With Me - Page 2

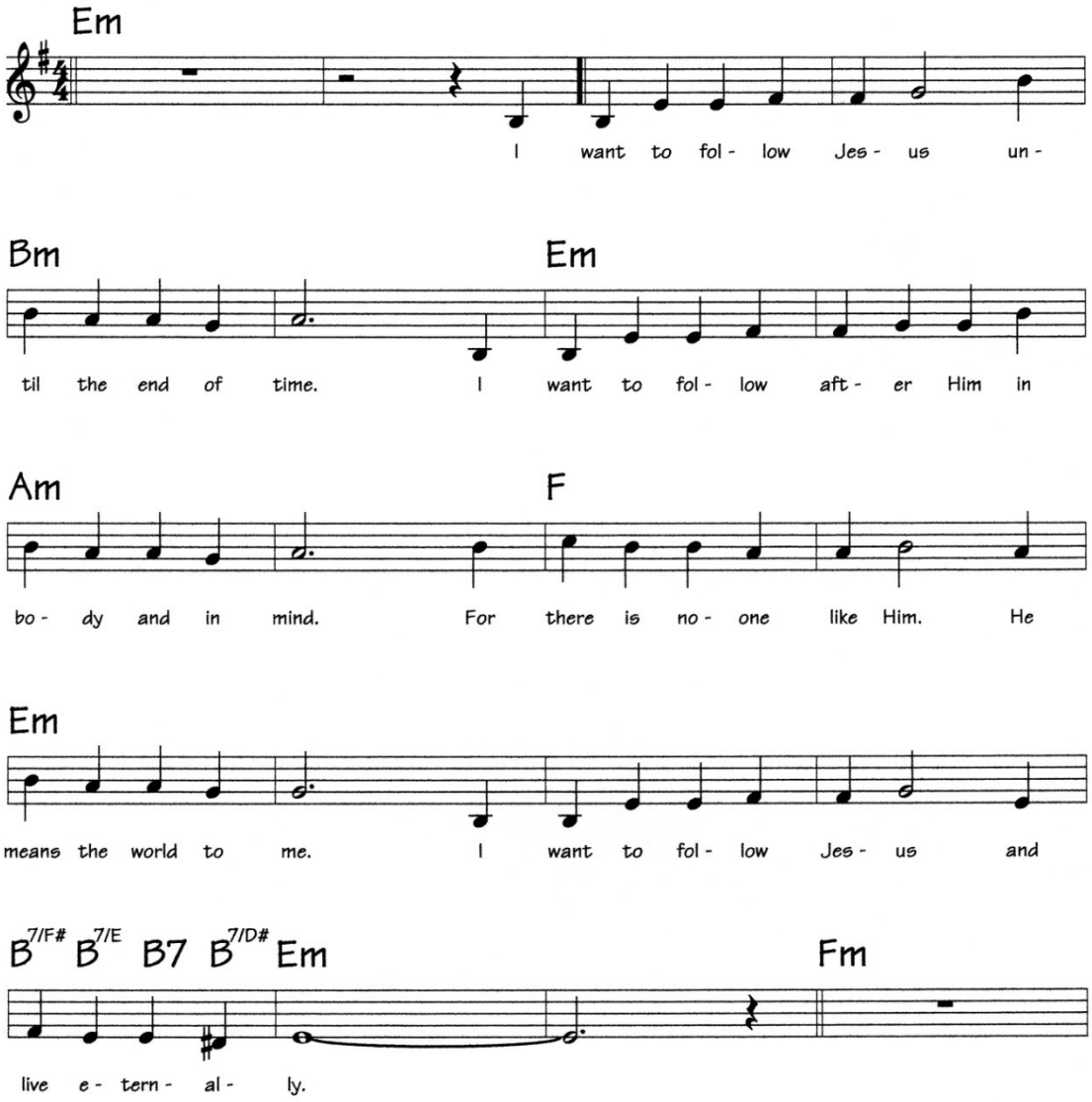


Come Along With Me - Page 3

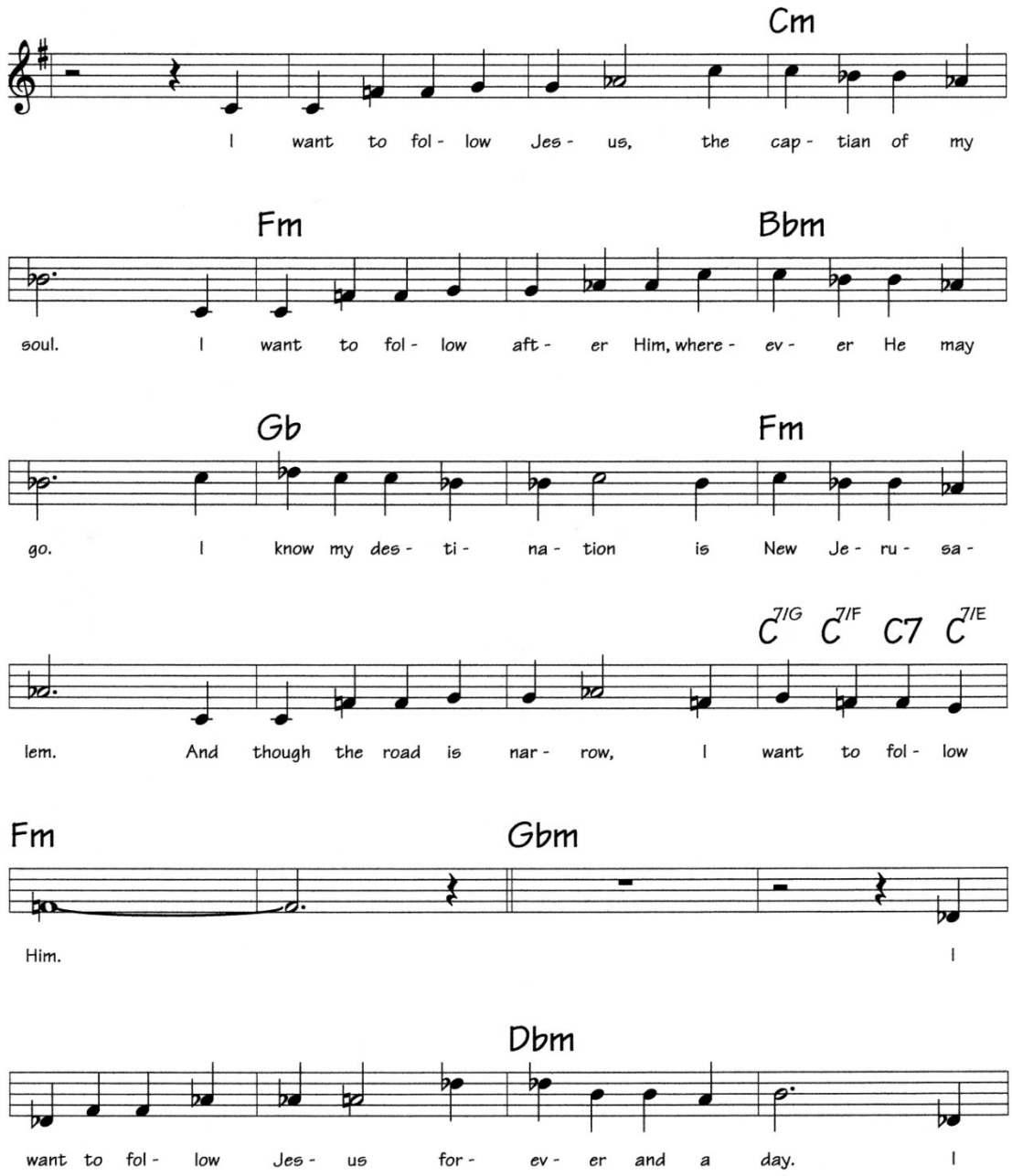
I Want To Follow Jesus

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1984

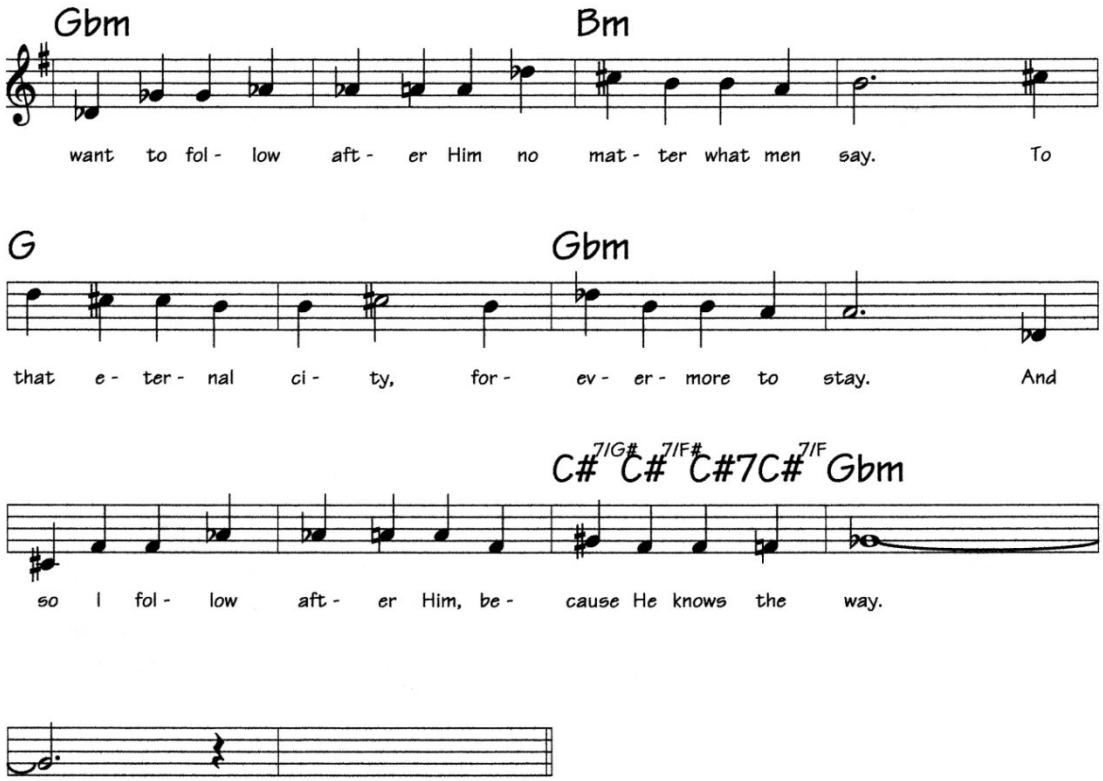
Tempo = 120



© 1984



I Want To Follow Jesus - Page 2

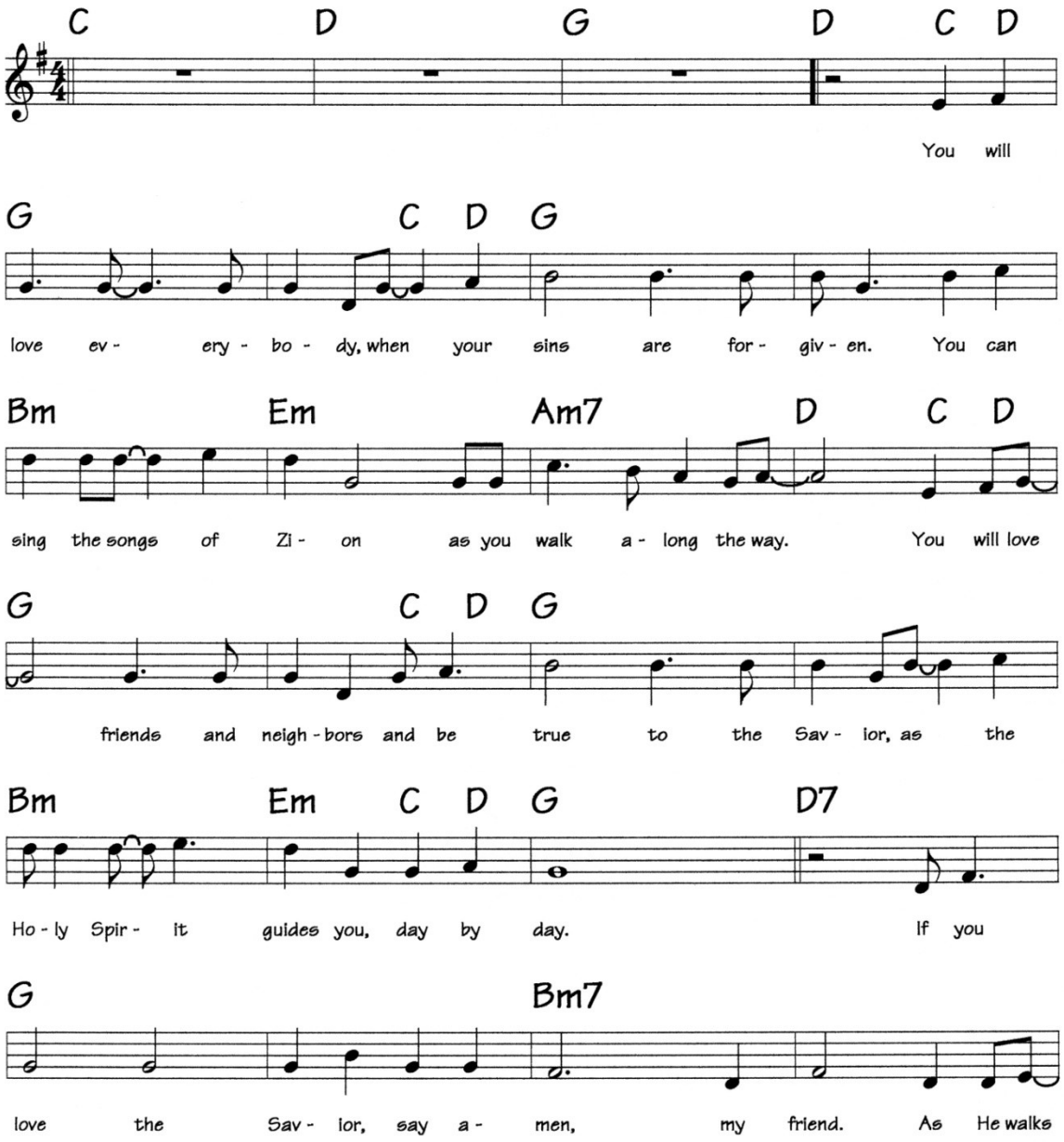


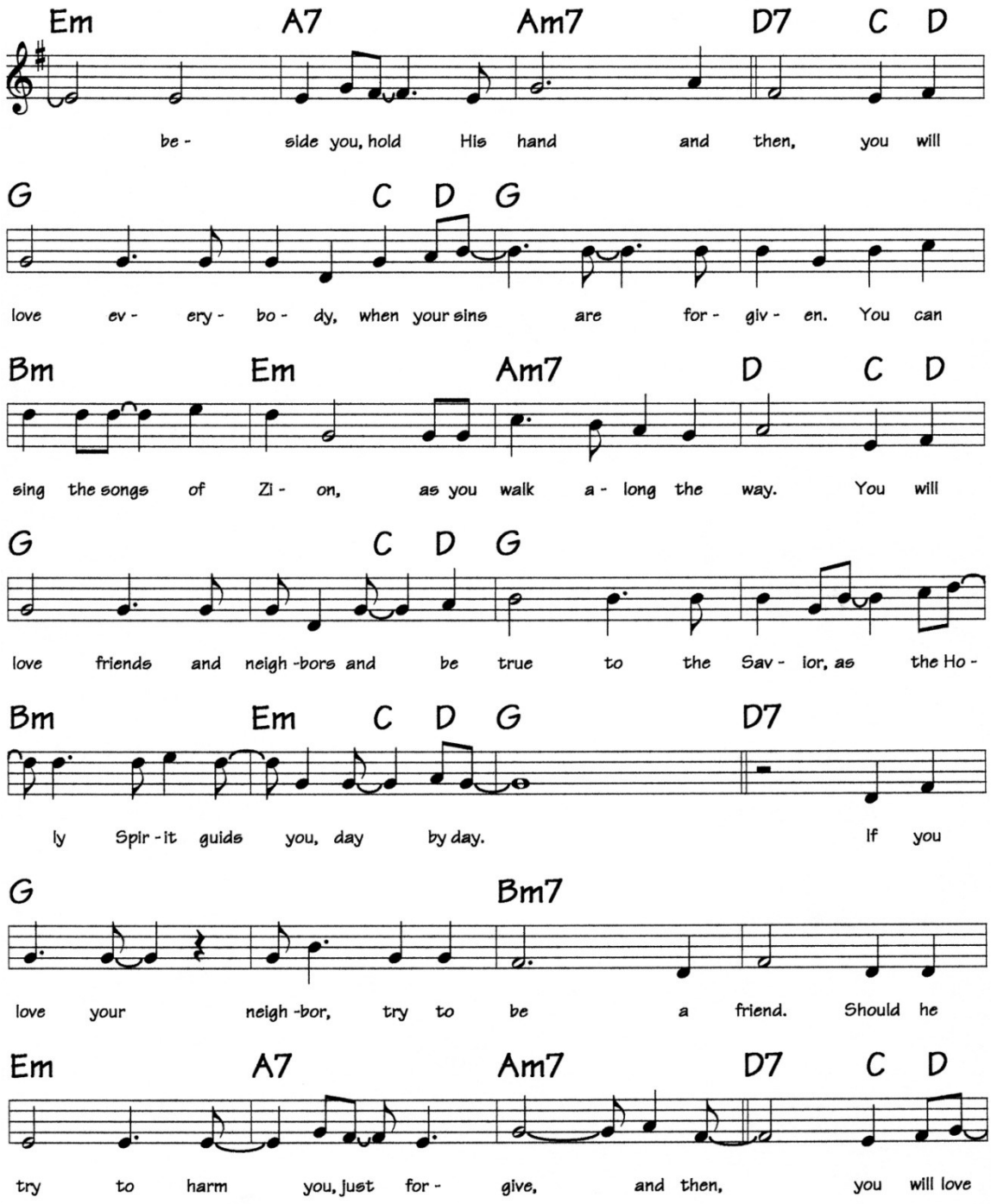
I Want To Follow Jesus - Page 3

You Will Love Everybody

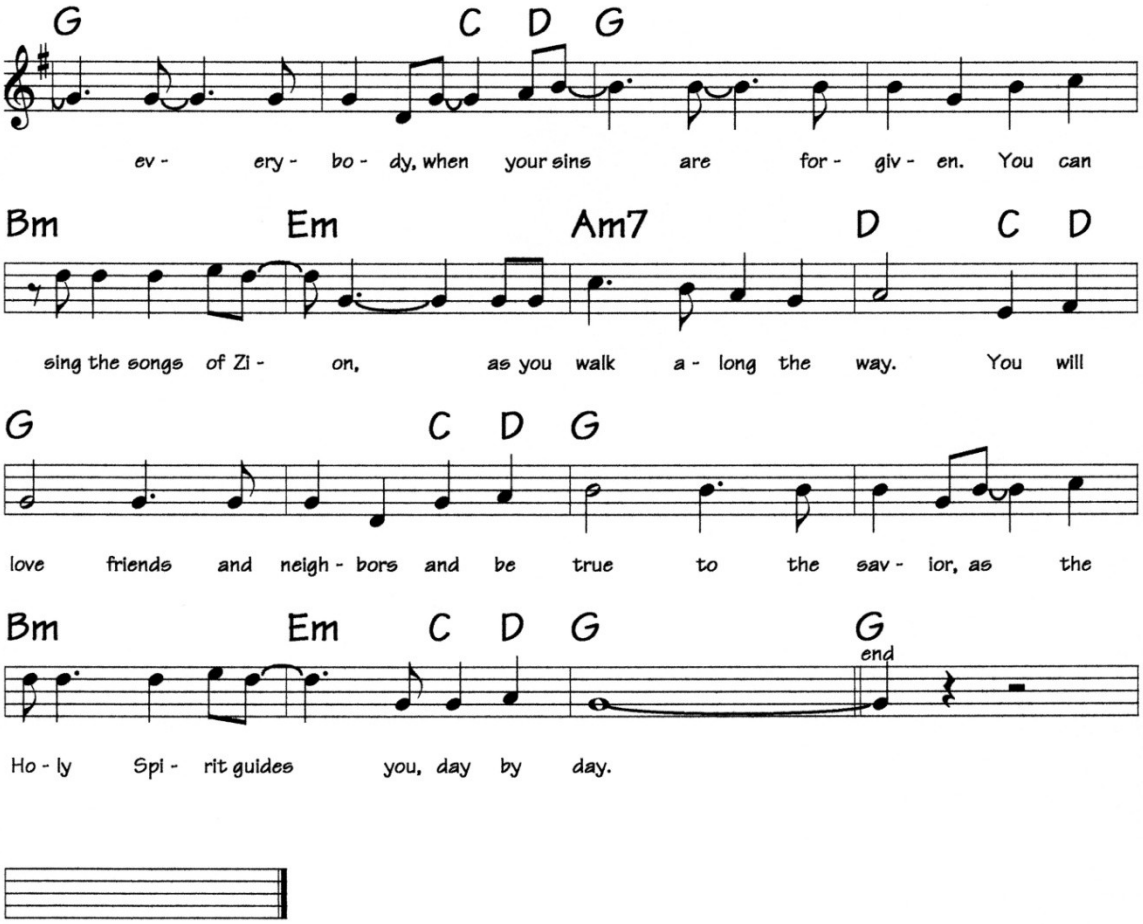
By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1983

Tempo = 125





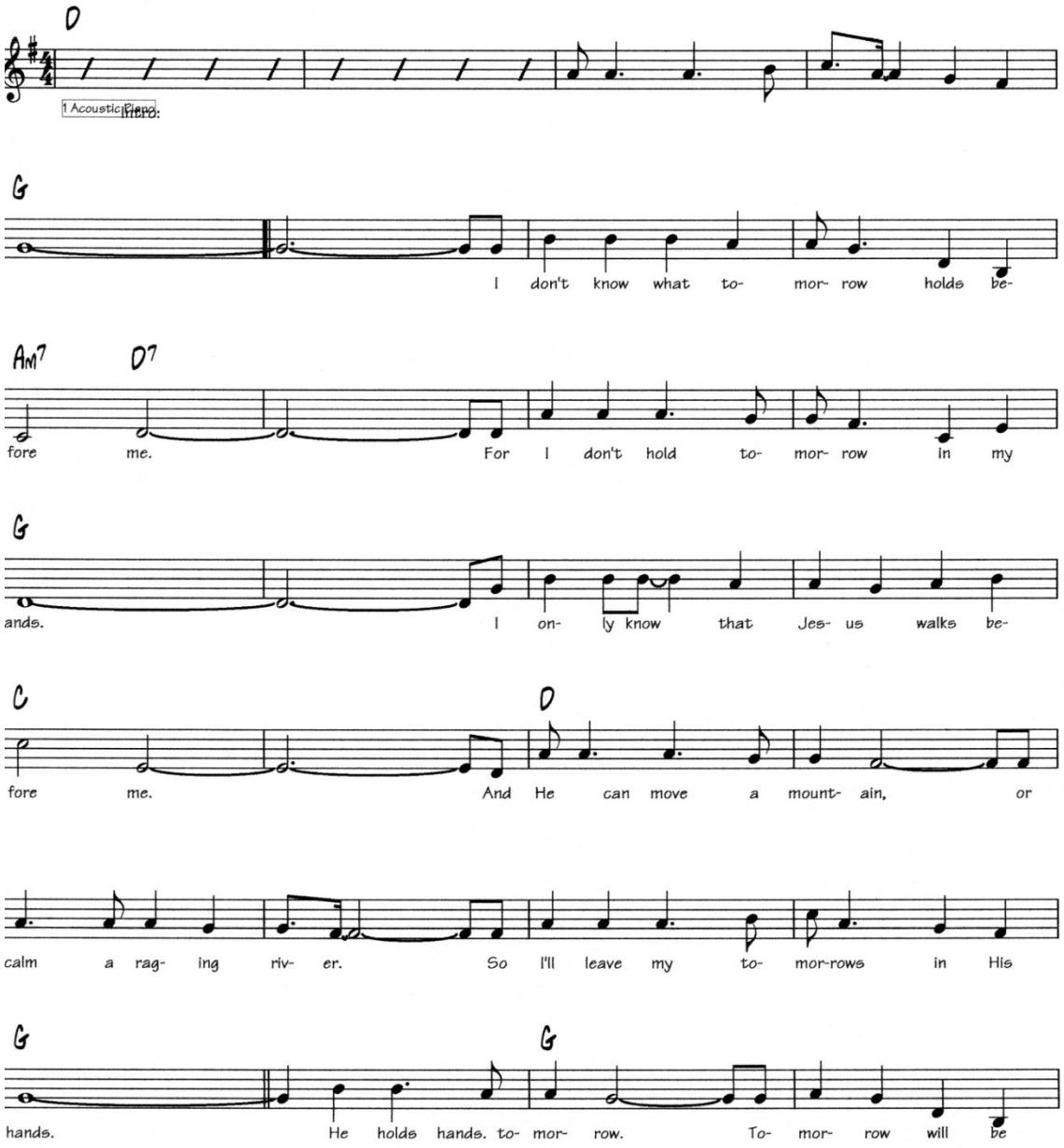
You Will Love Everybody - Page 2

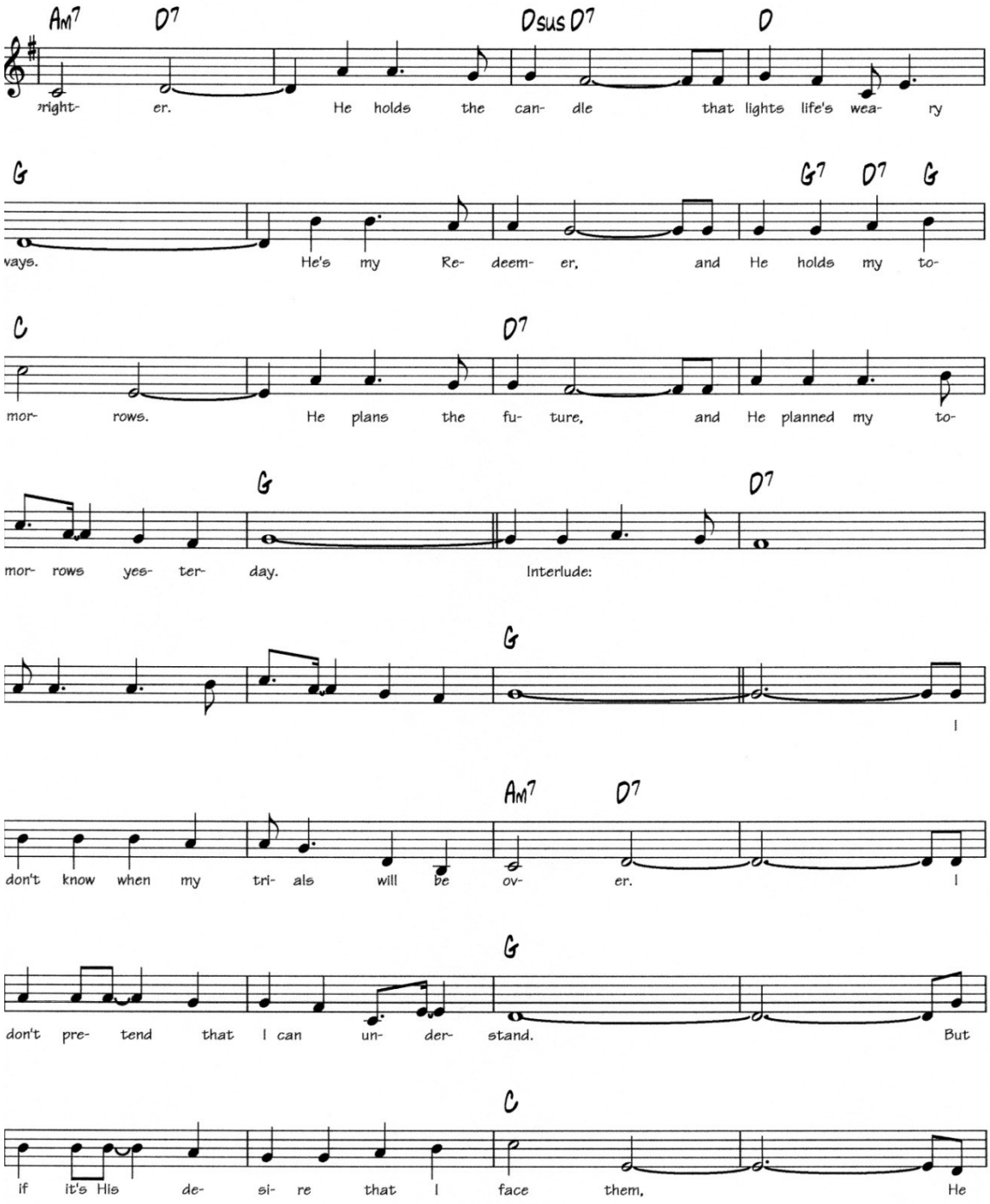

G C D G
ev - ery - bo - dy, when your sins are for - giv - en. You can
Bm Em Am7 D C D
sing the songs of Zi - on, as you walk a - long the way. You will
G C D G
love friends and neigh - bors and be true to the sav - ior, as the
Bm Em C D G G
end
Ho - ly Spi - rit guides you, day by day.

He Holds Tomorrow

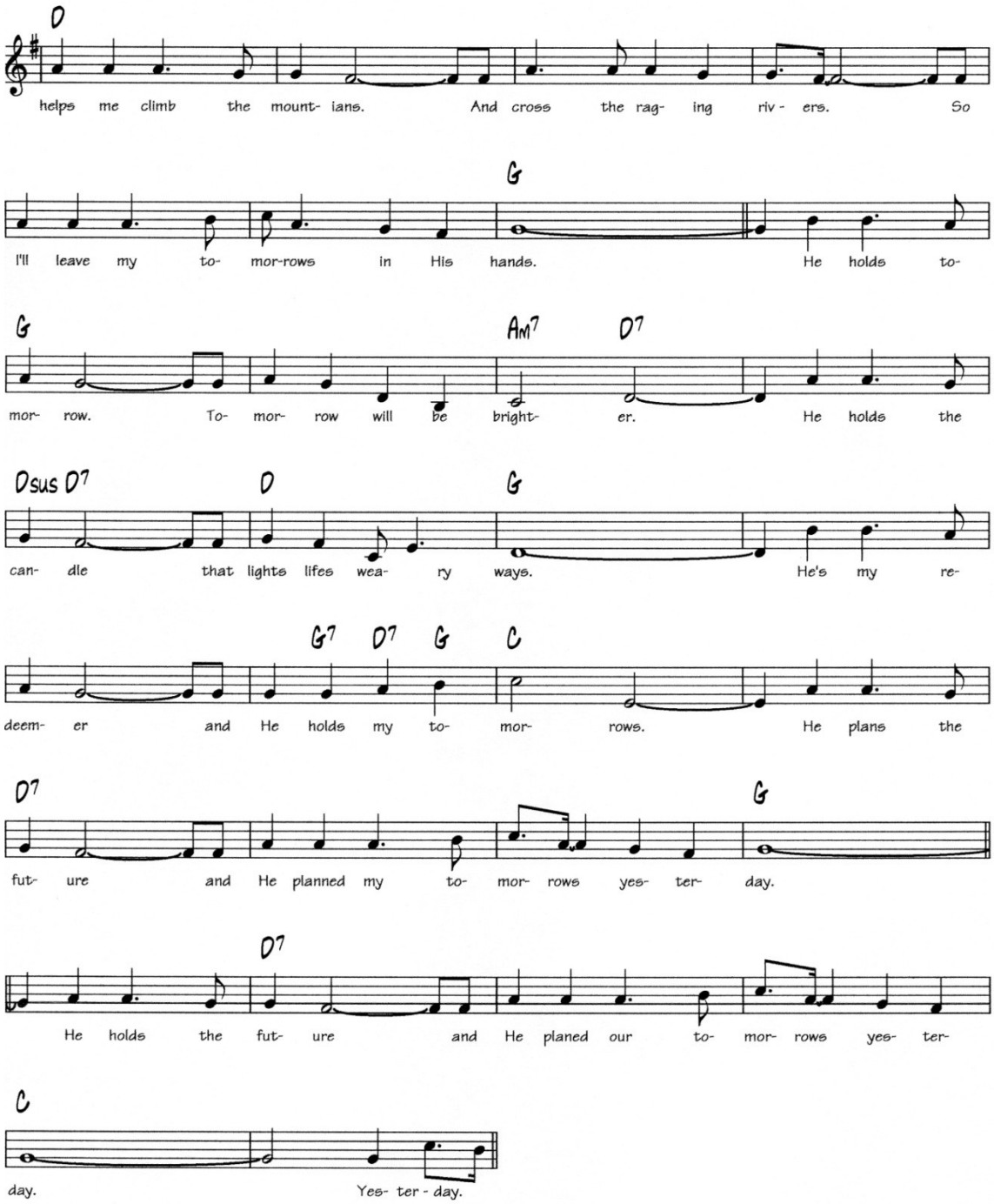
By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1988 Words & Music

Tempo = 115





He Holds Tomorrow - Page 2

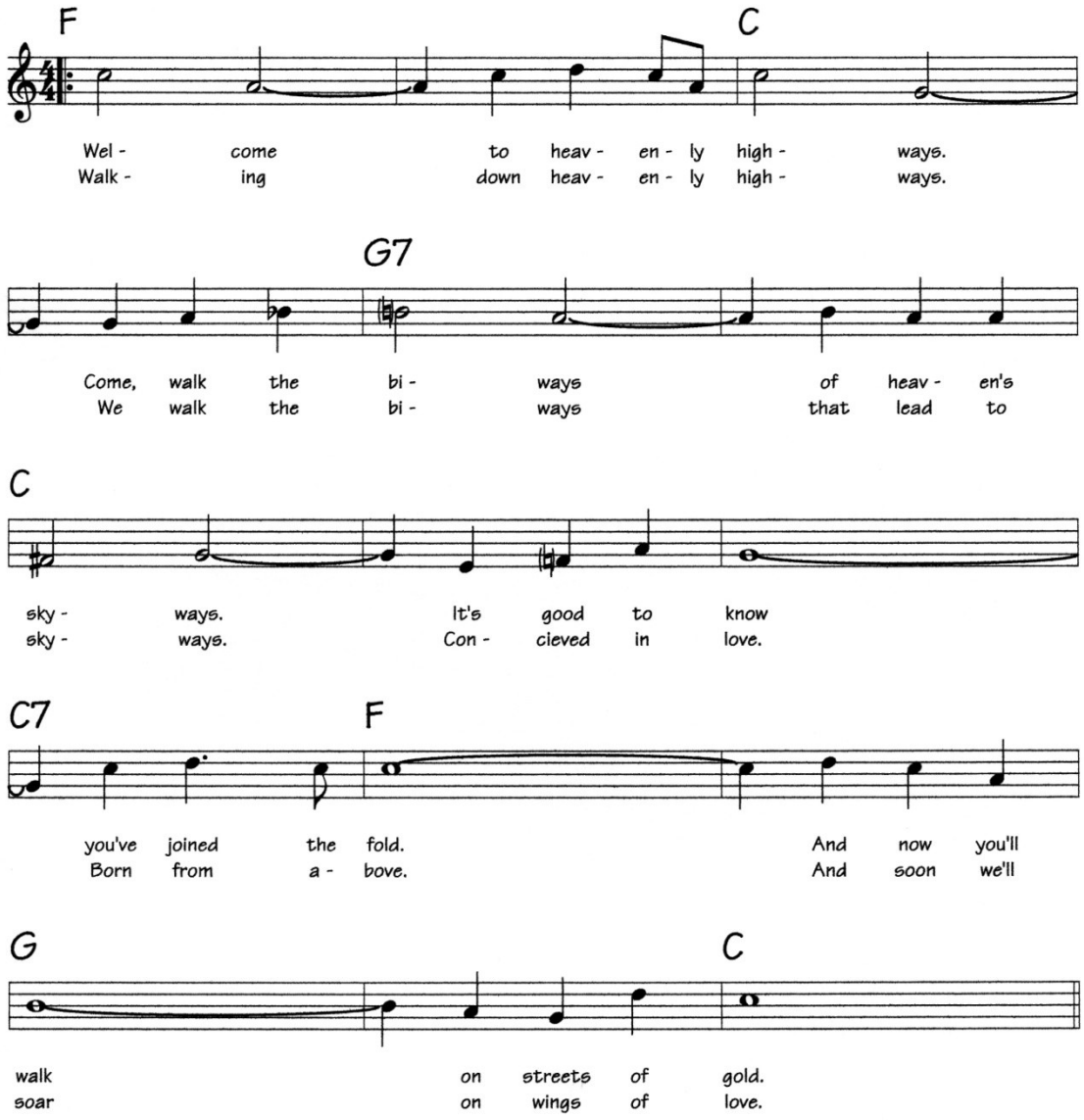


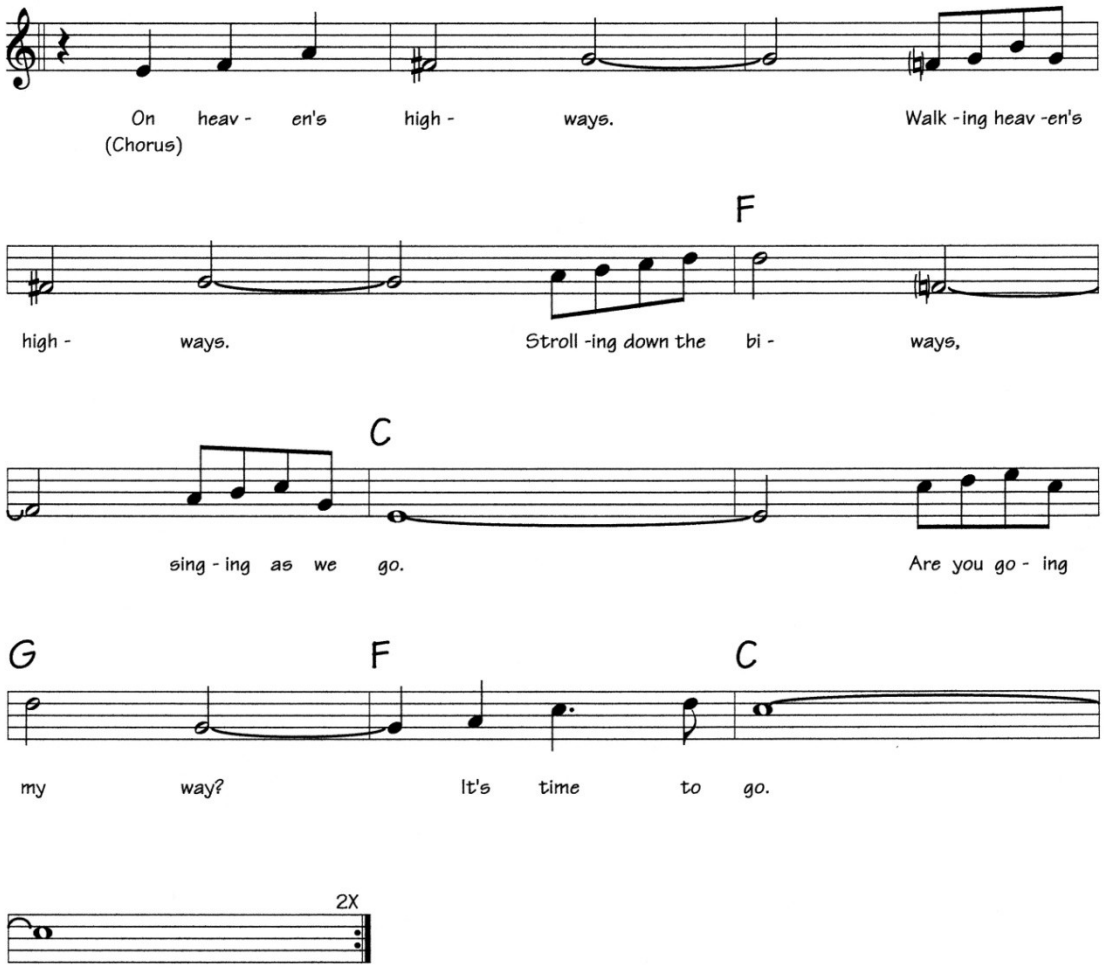
He Holds Tomorrow - Page 3

Heavenly Highways

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1995

Tempo = 120



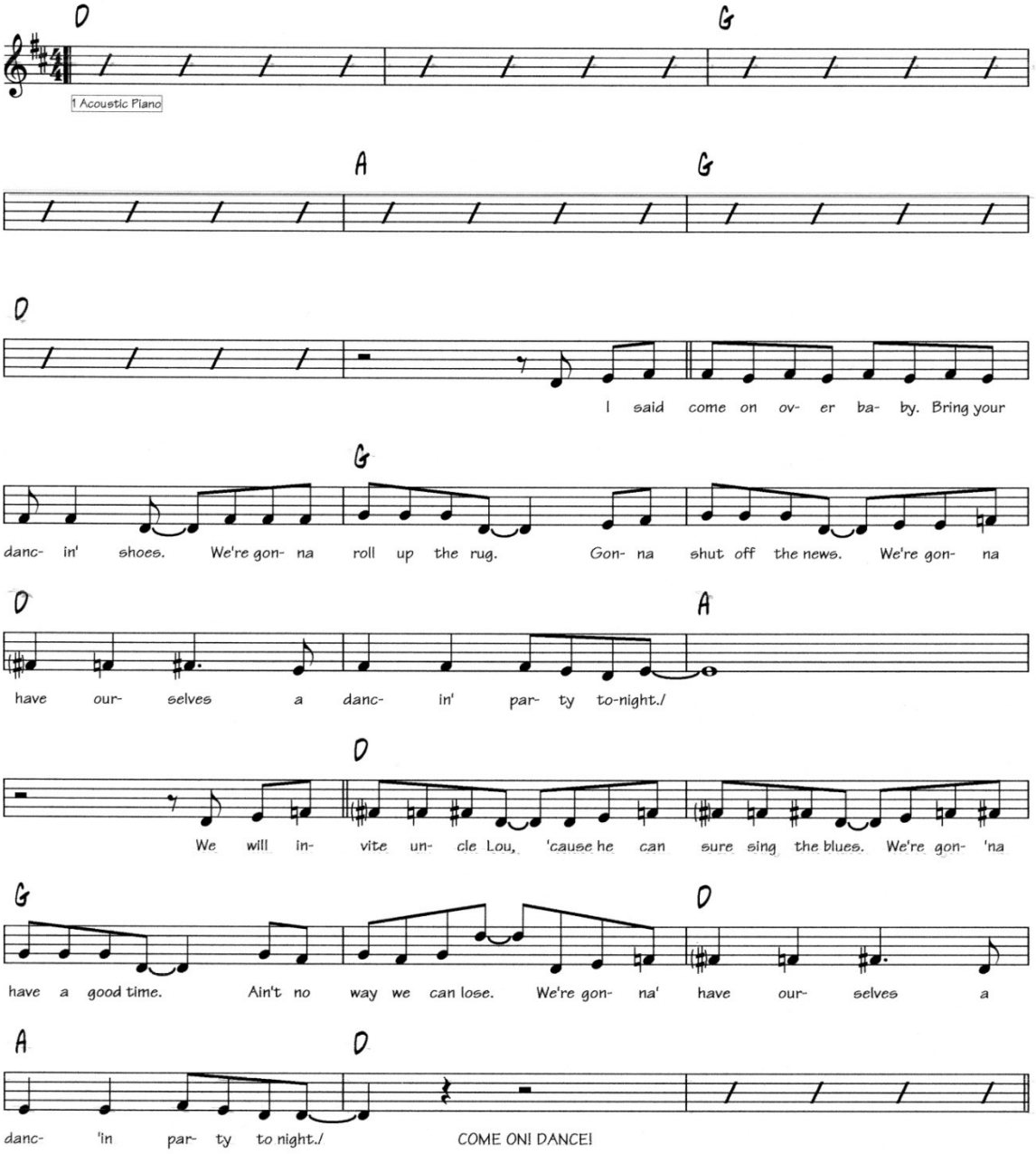


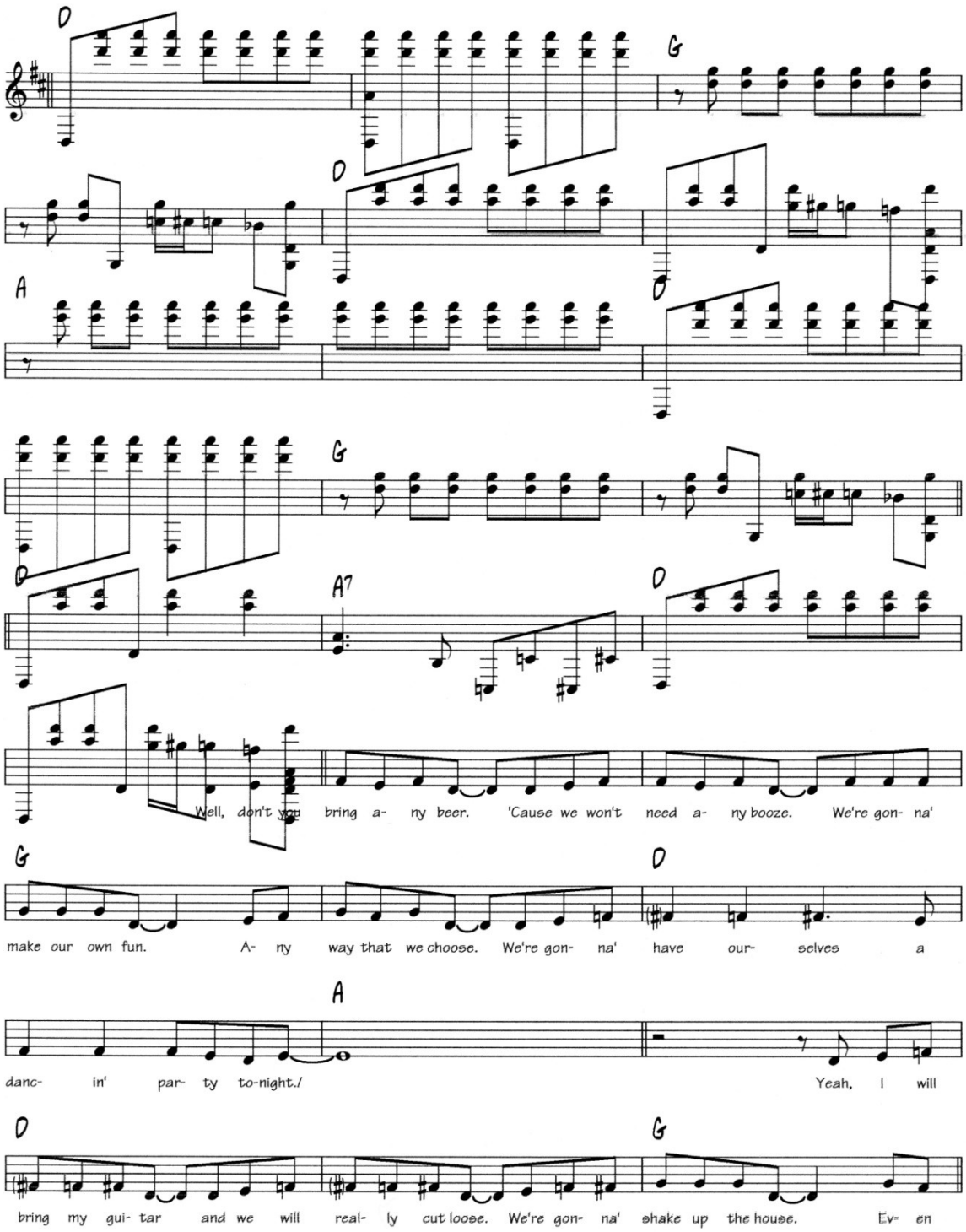
Heavenly Highways - Page 2

Dancin' Party Tonight

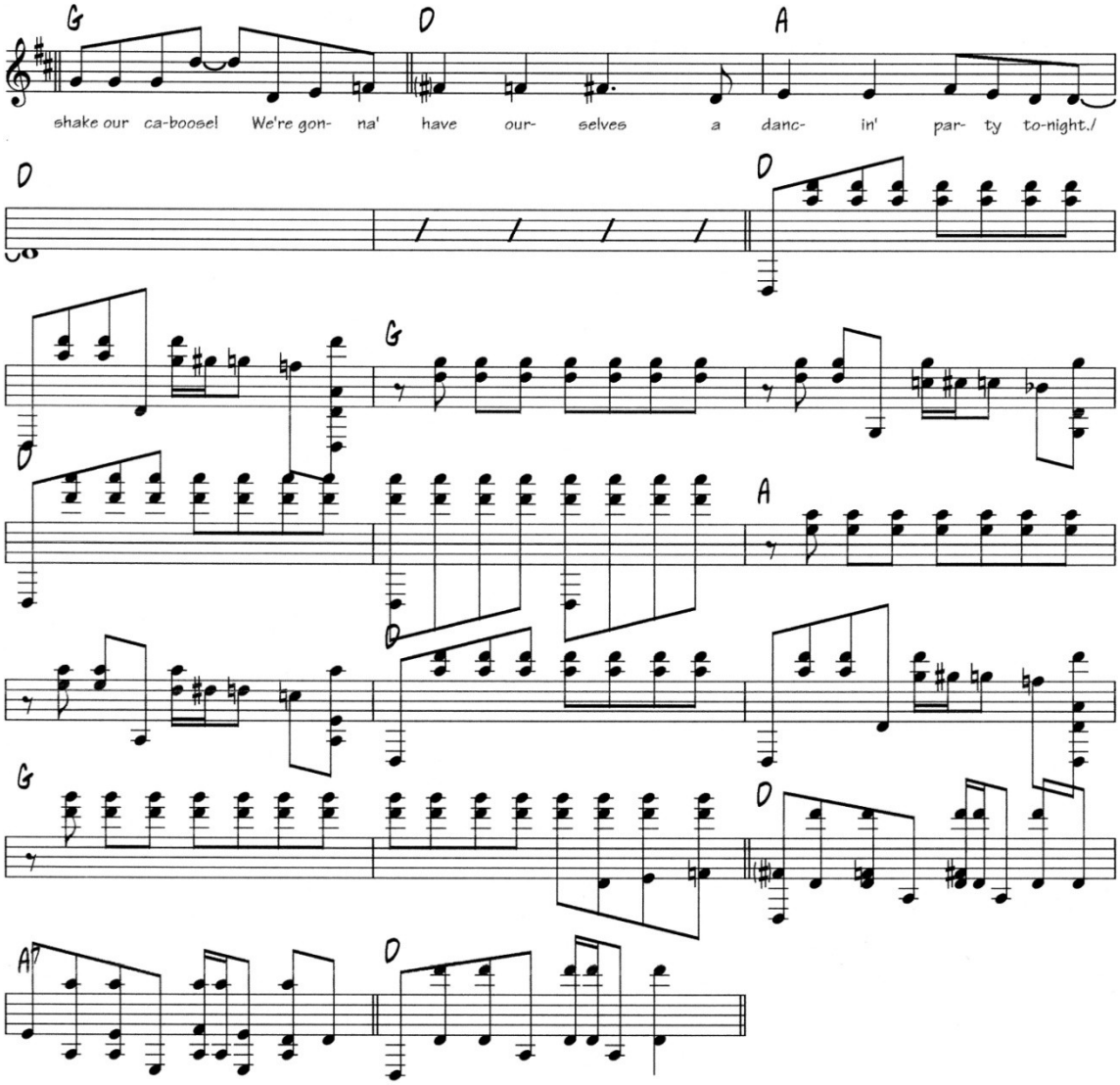
Uptempo Country Boogie
Tempo = 145

By: Lyndell R Martin
©2014 Words & Music





Dancin' Party Tonight - Page 2

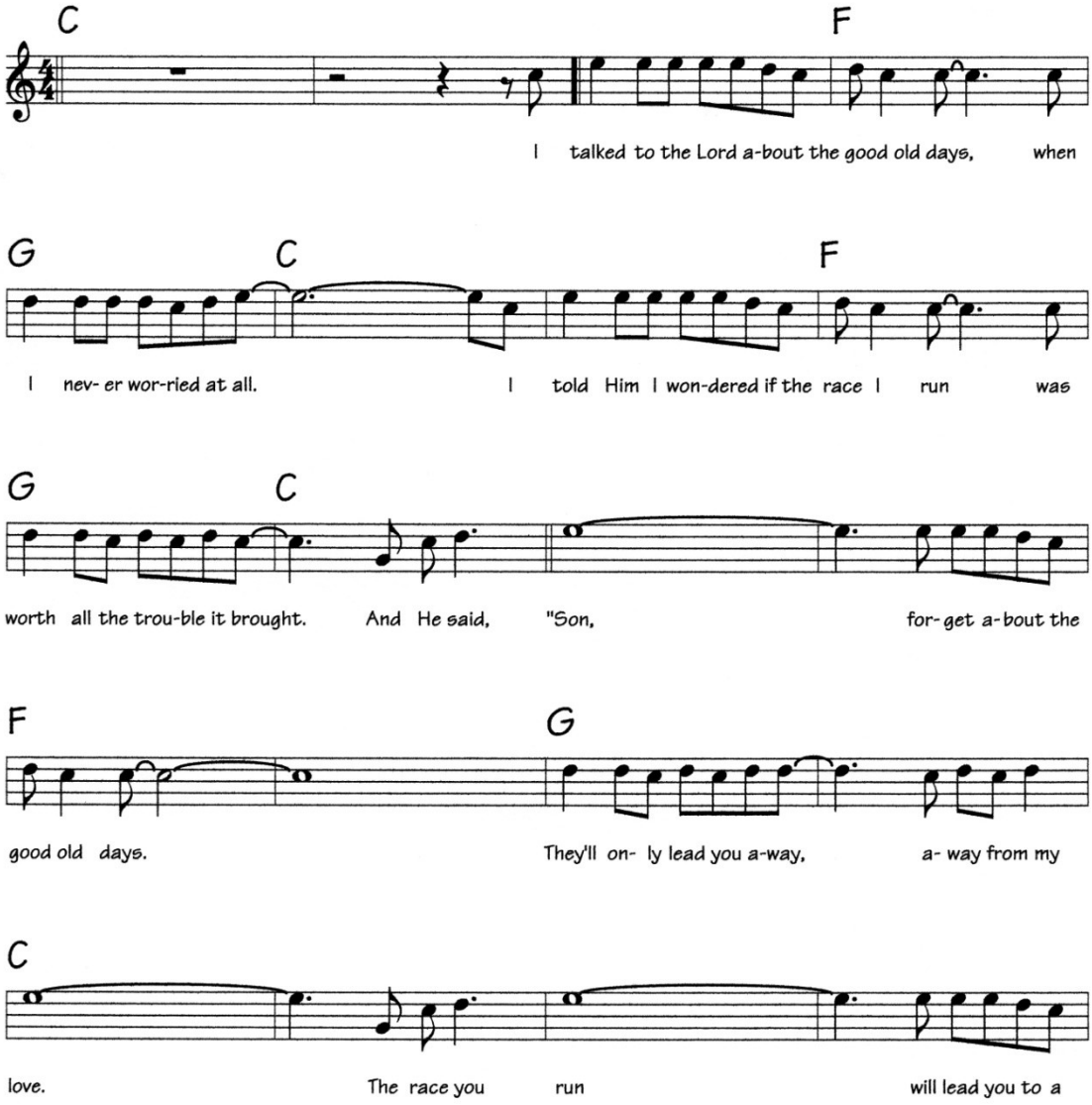


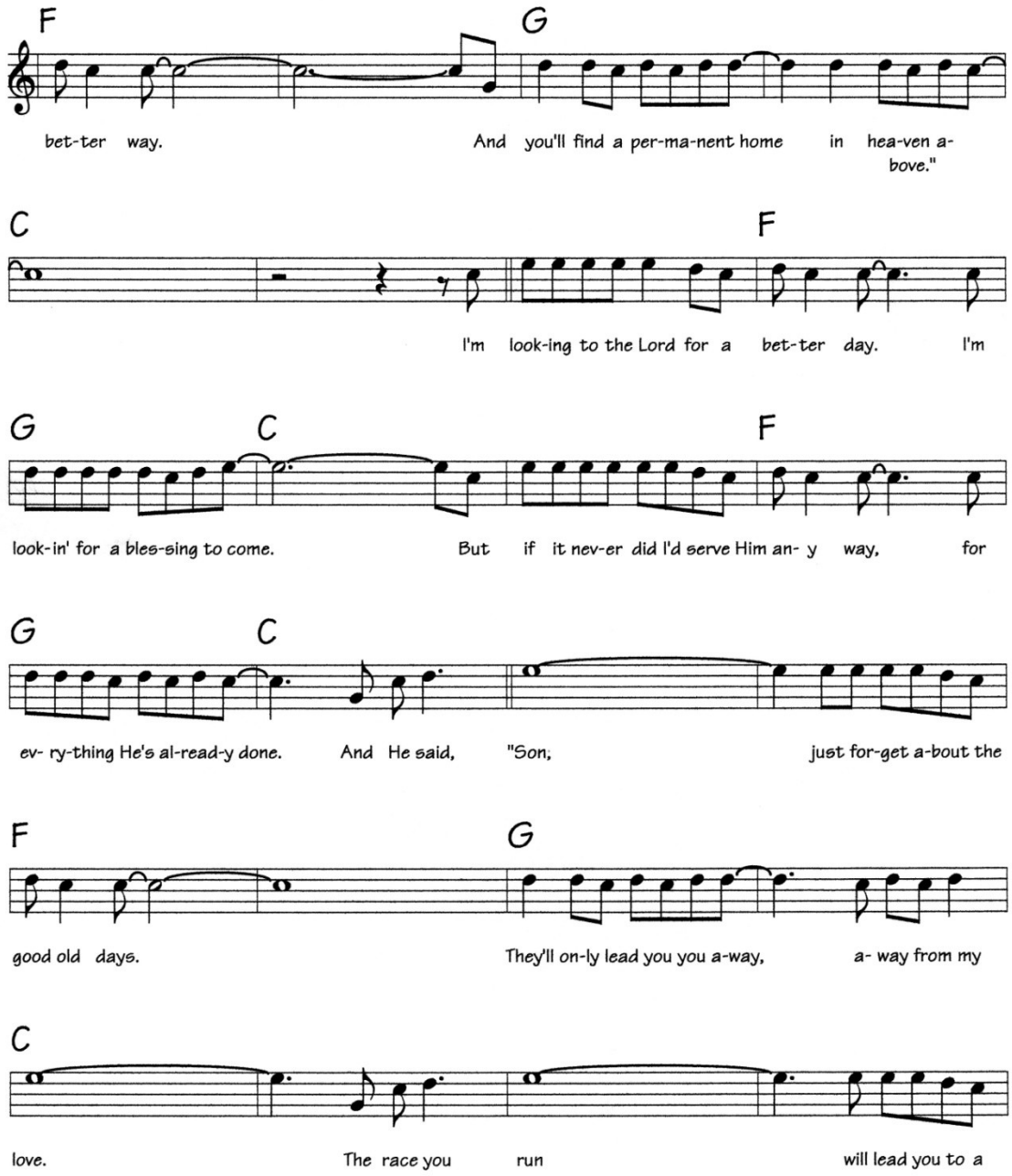
Dancin' Party Tonight - Page 3

THE GOOD OLD DAYS

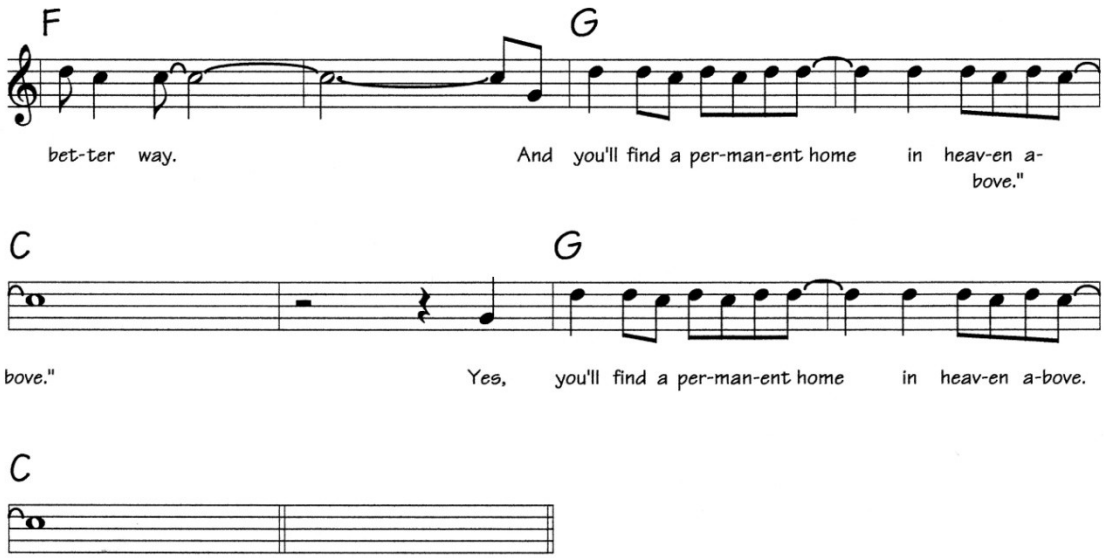
By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1988

Tempo = 130





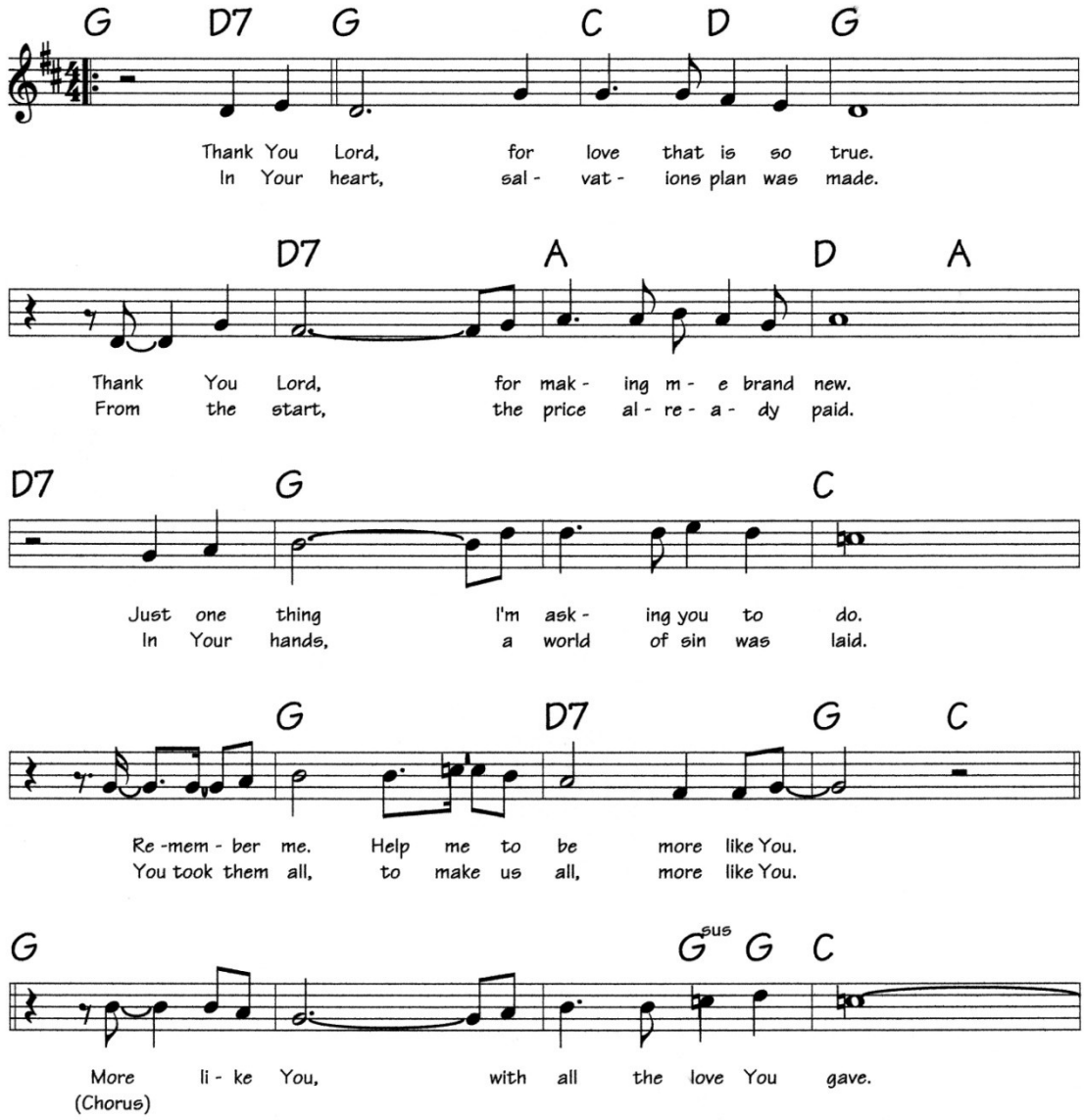
THE GOOD OLD DAYS - Page 3

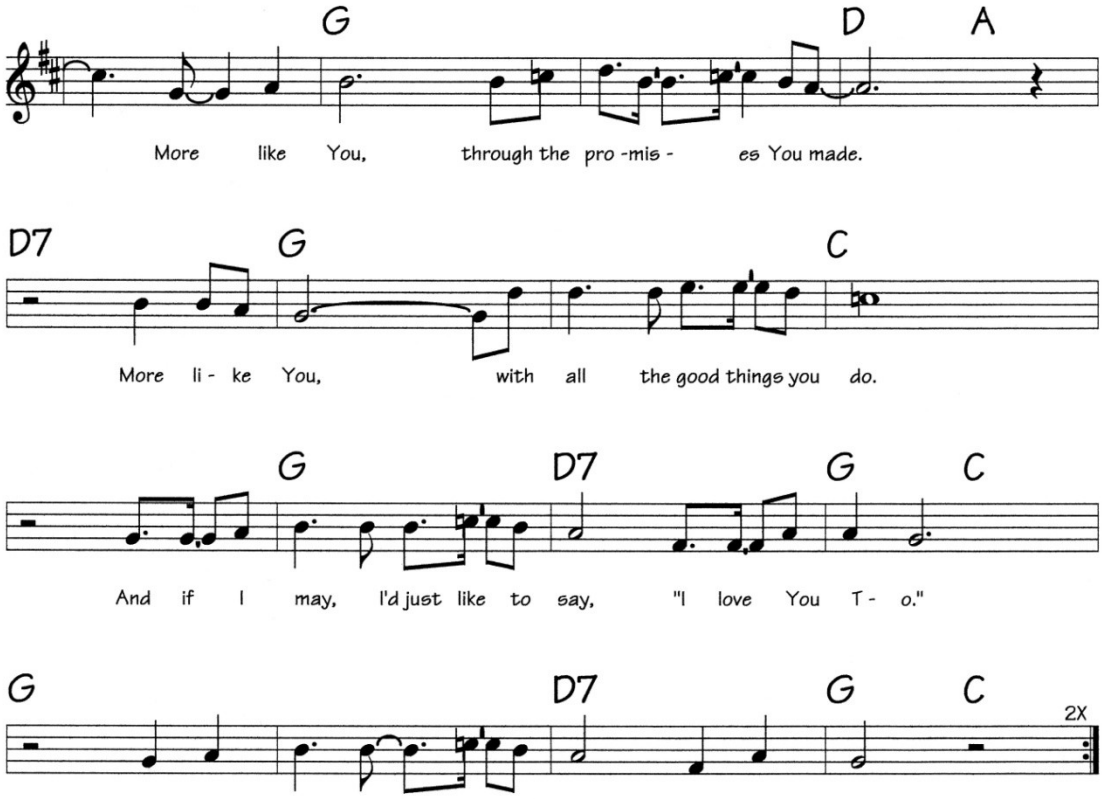

F
G
bet-ter way.
And you'll find a per-man-ent home in heav-en a-
bove."
C
G
bove."
Yes, you'll find a per-man-ent home in heav-en a-bove.
C

More Like You

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1984

Tempo = 125



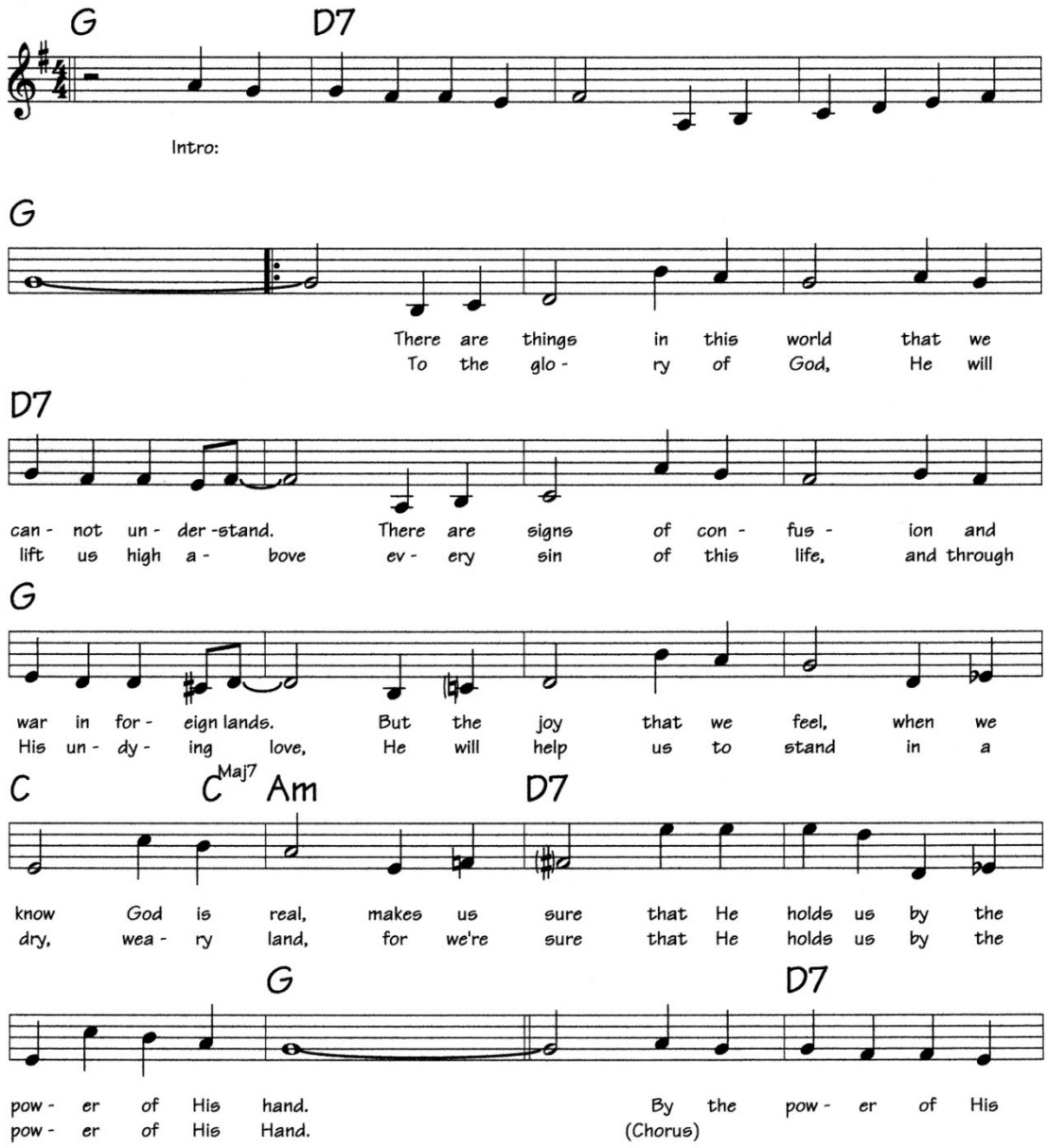


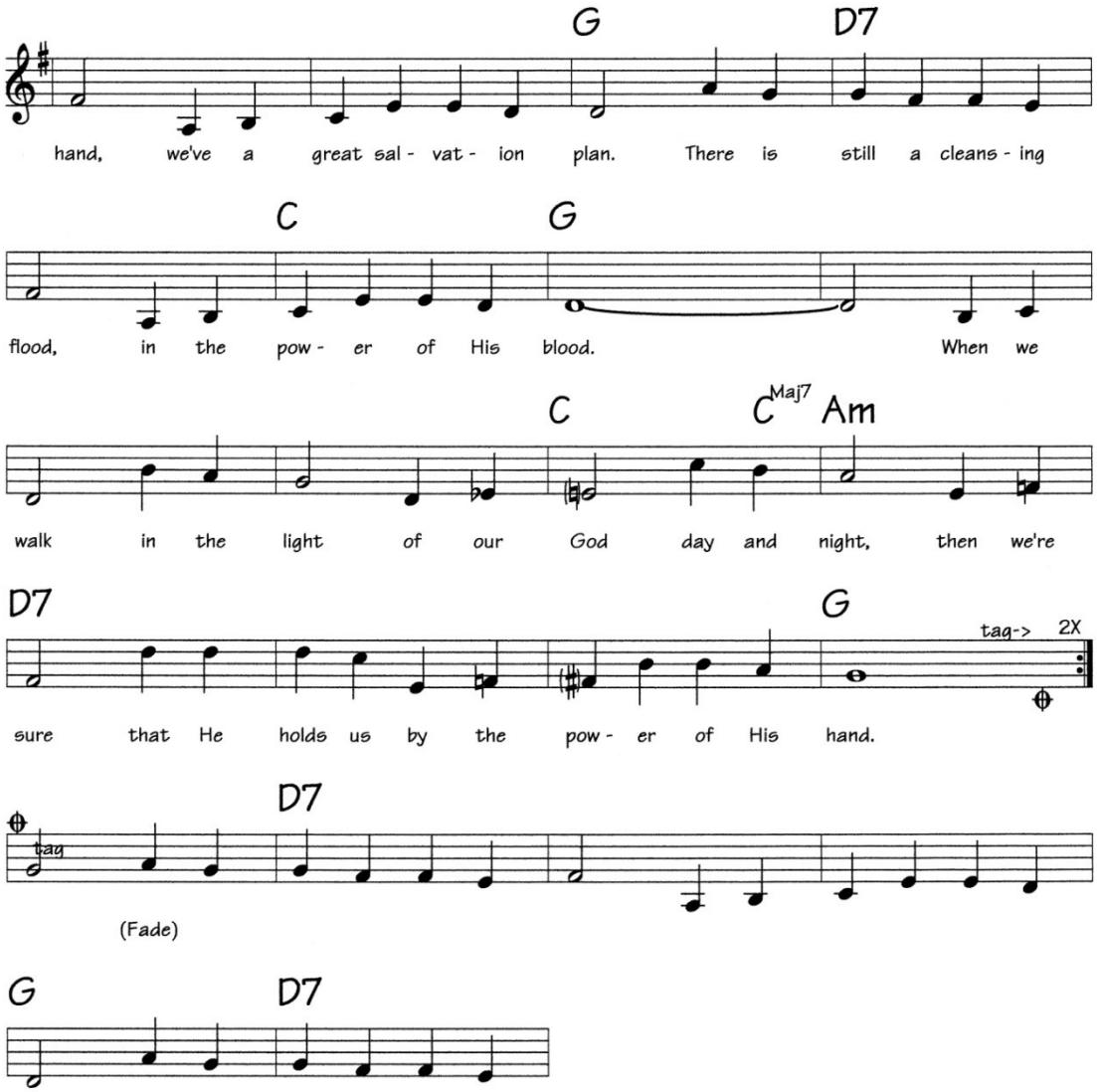
Interludes & Tag:

By The Power Of His Hand

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1989

Tempo = 132



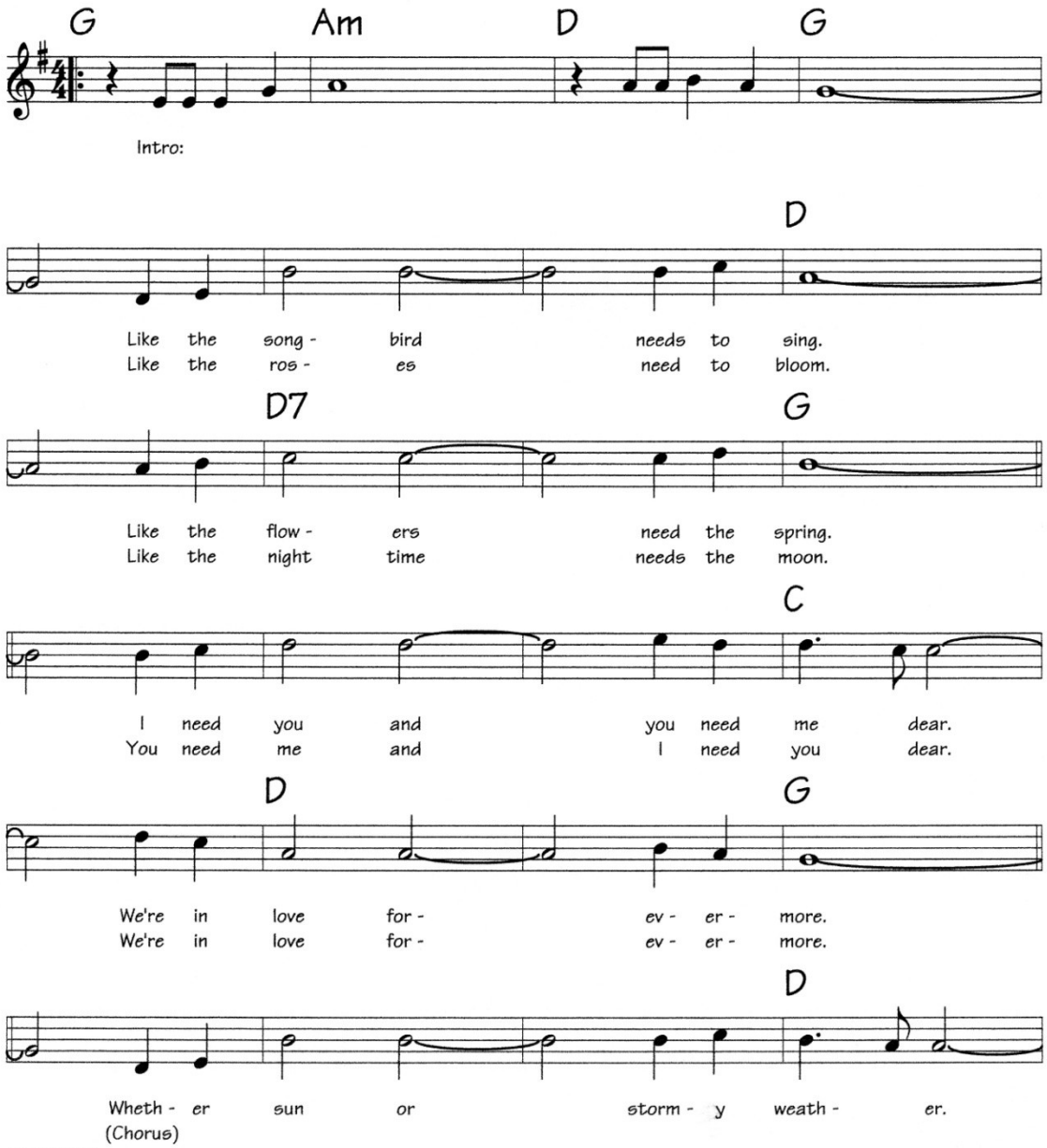


By The Power Of His Hand - Page 2

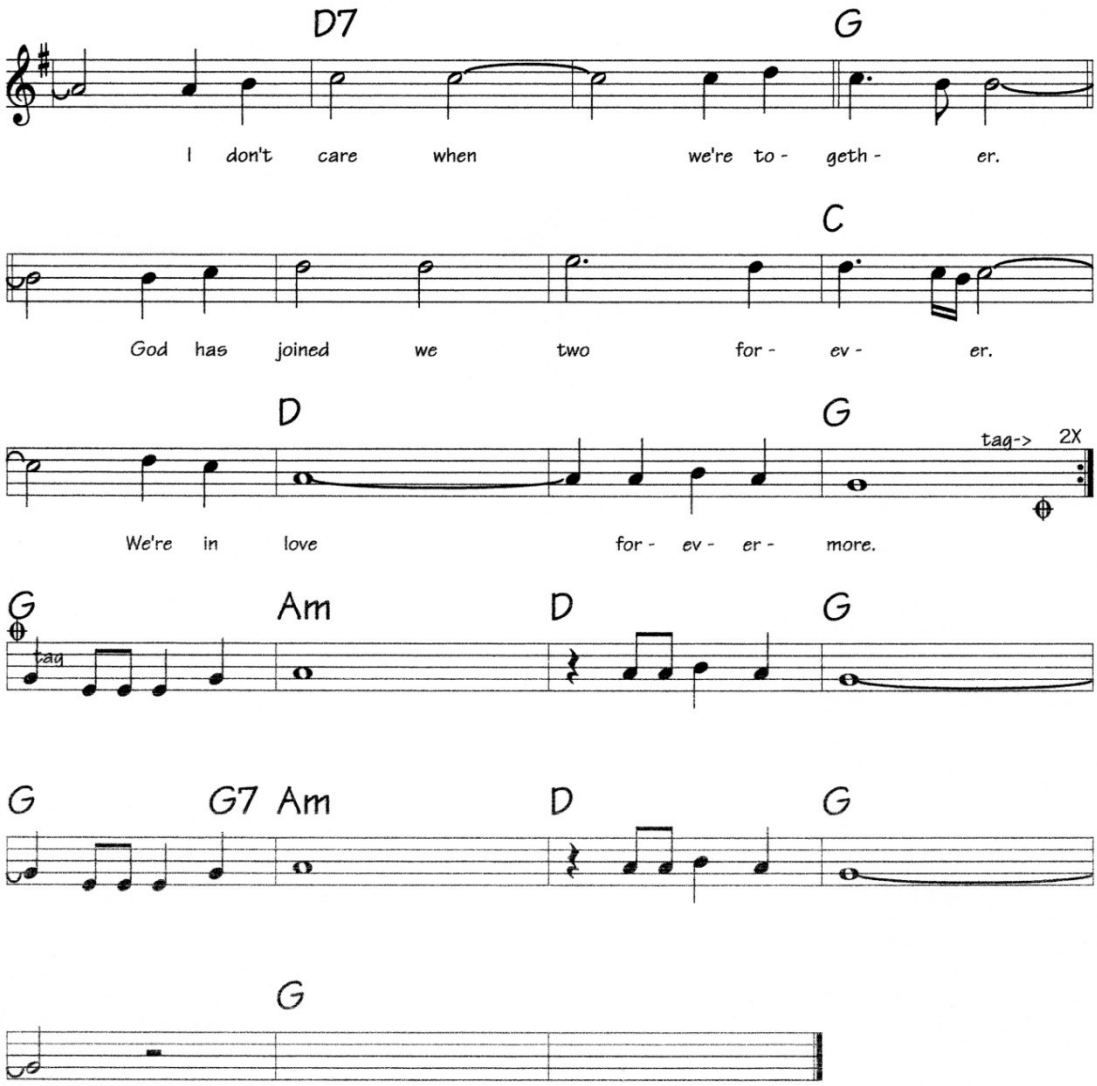
We're In Love (Mandi & Wade's Song)

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1995

Tempo = 115



© 1995

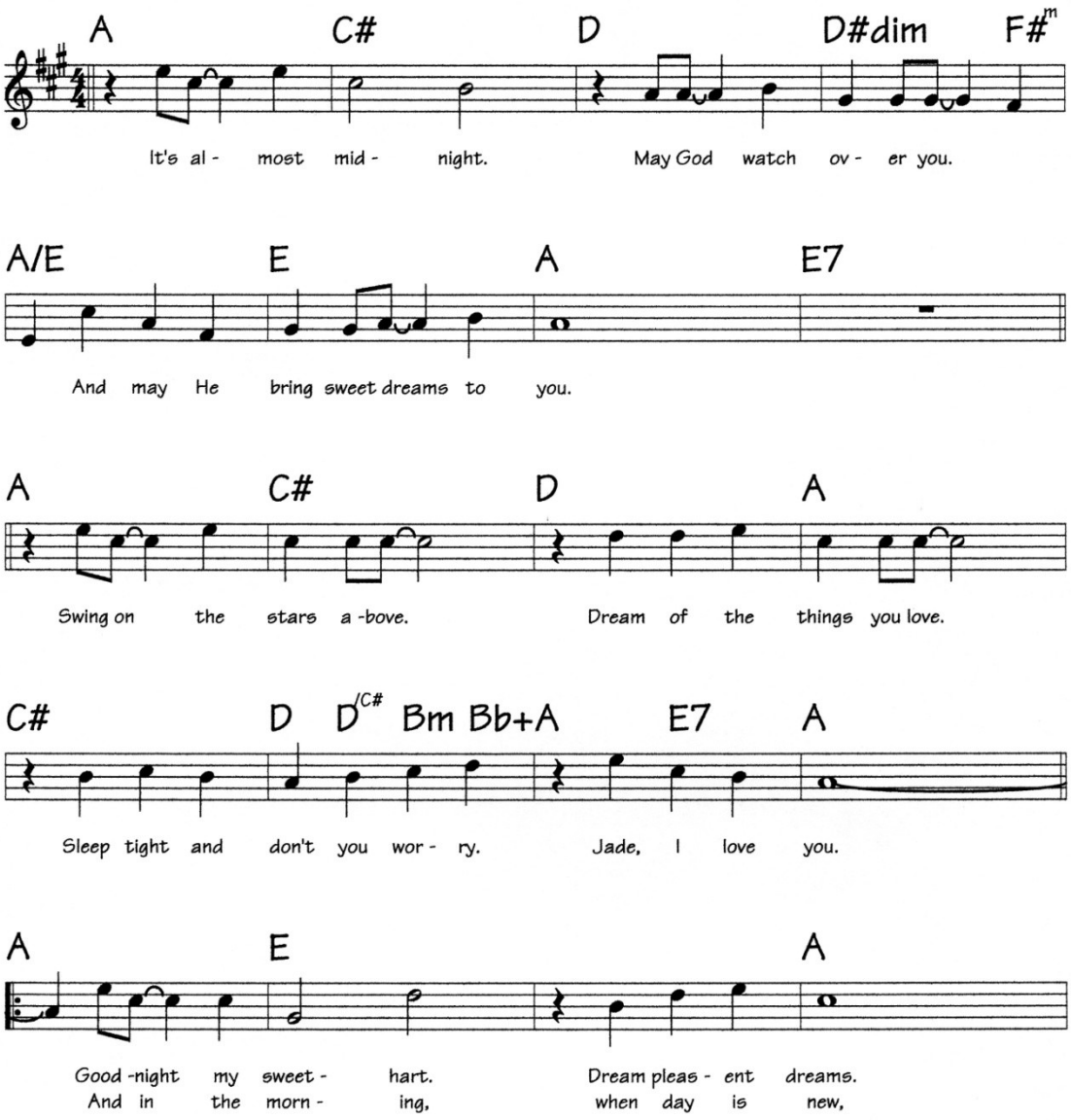


We're In Love (Mandi & Wade's Song) - Page 2

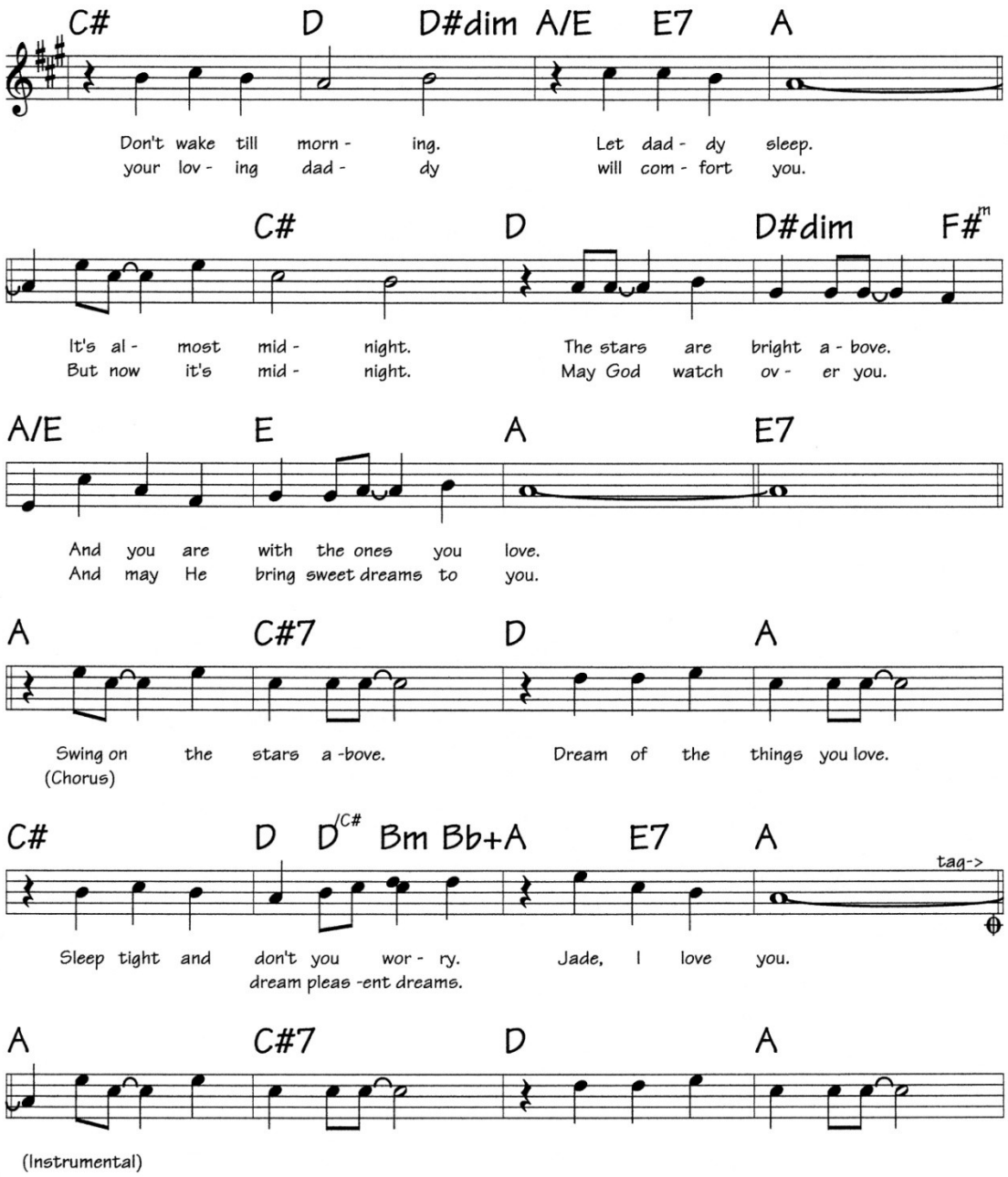
Jade's Song

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1997

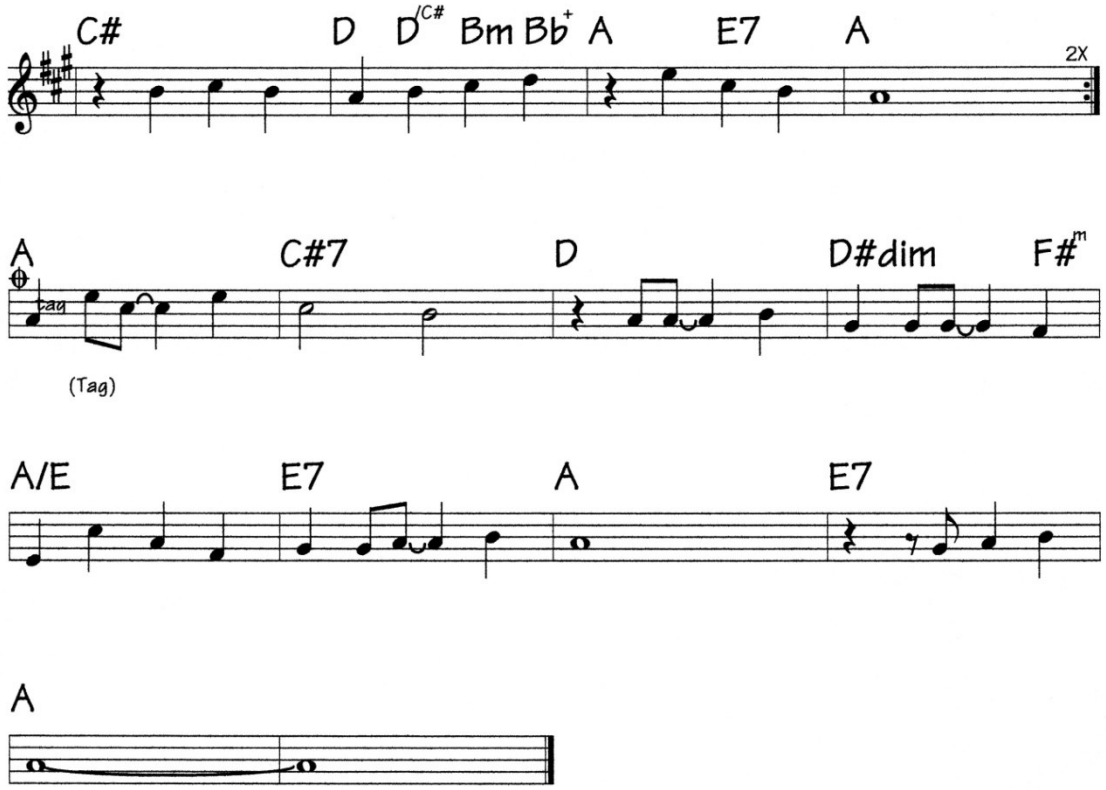
Tempo = 130



© 1997



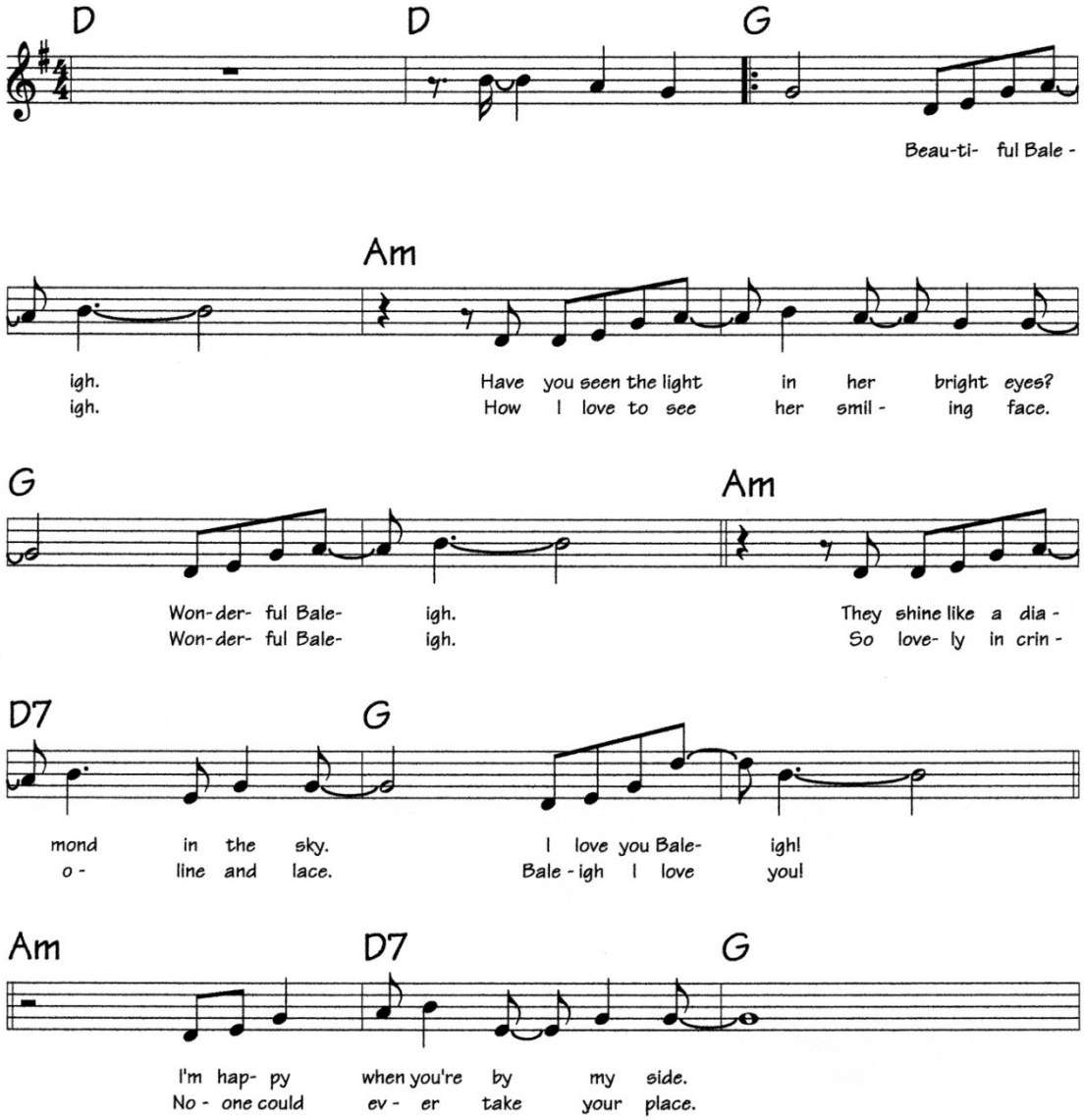
Jade's Song - Page 2


C#
D
D/C#
Bm
Bb+
A
E7
A
2X
A
C#7
D
D#dim
F#m
Tag
(Tag)
A/E
E7
A
E7
A

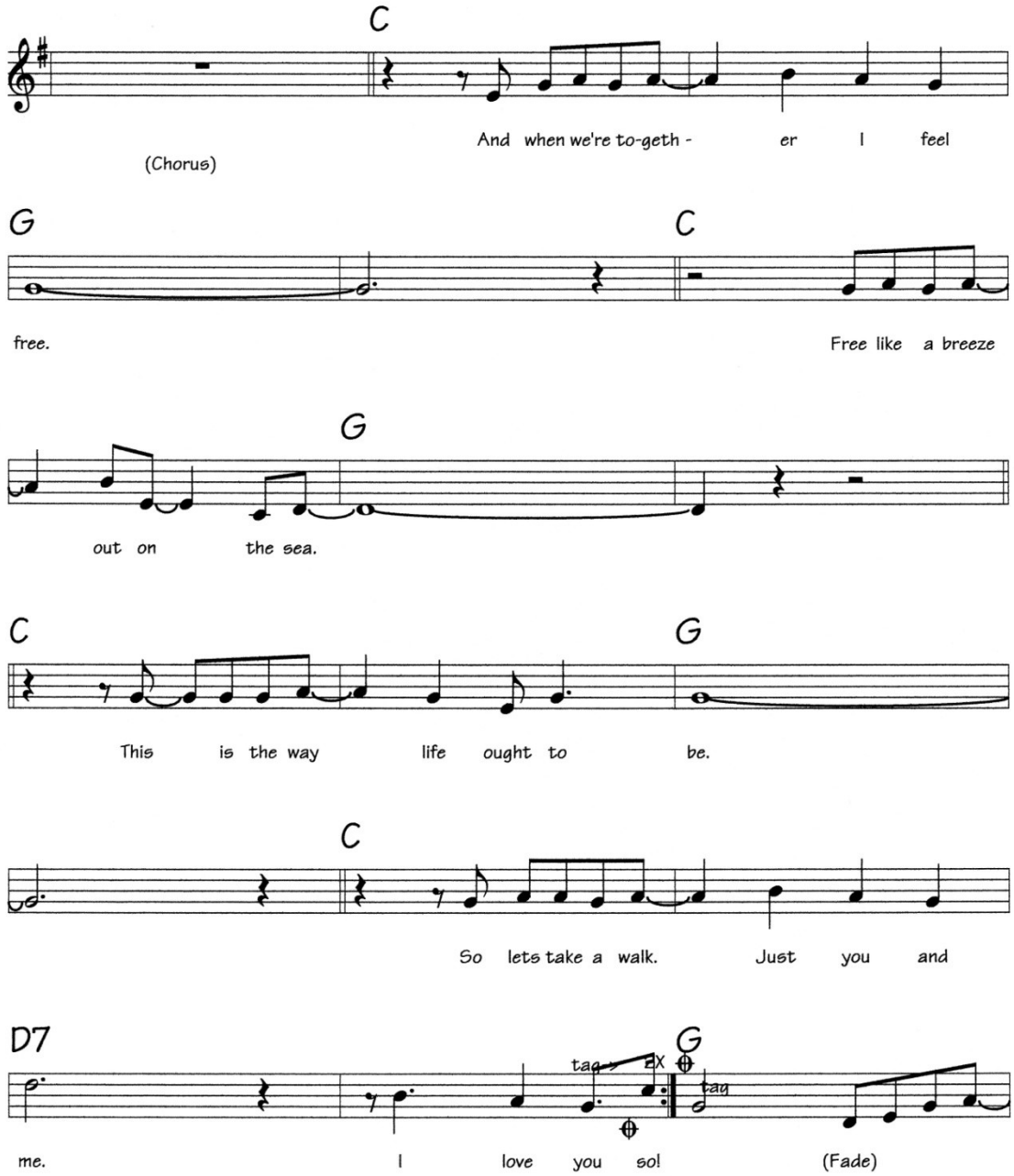
Beautiful Baleigh

Words & Music: Lyndell R. Martin
© 2008

Tempo = 117



© 2008

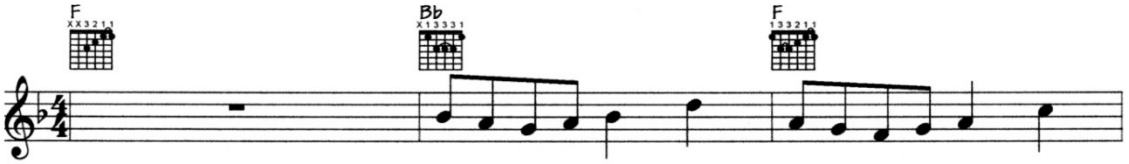


Beautiful Baleigh - Page 2

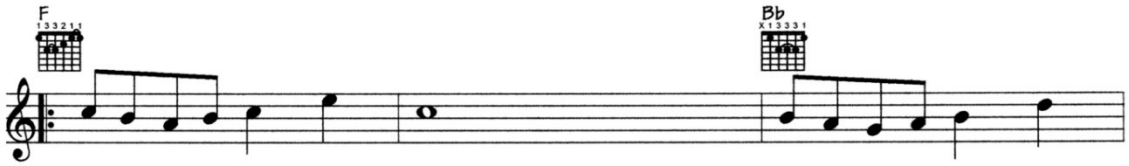
JALYN, HAVE A LOVELY LIFE

Tempo = 120

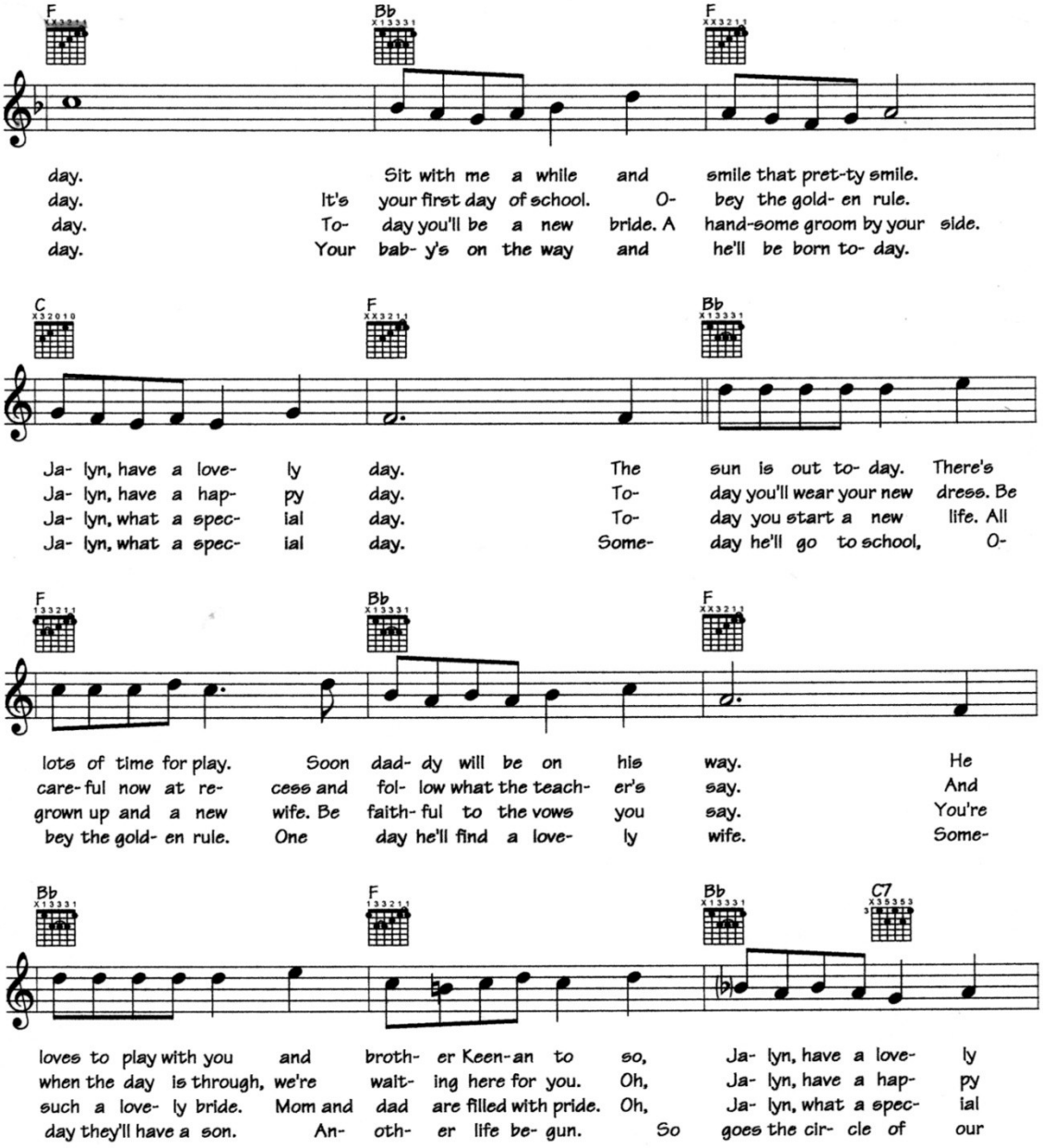
© 2010
By: Lyndell R. Martin



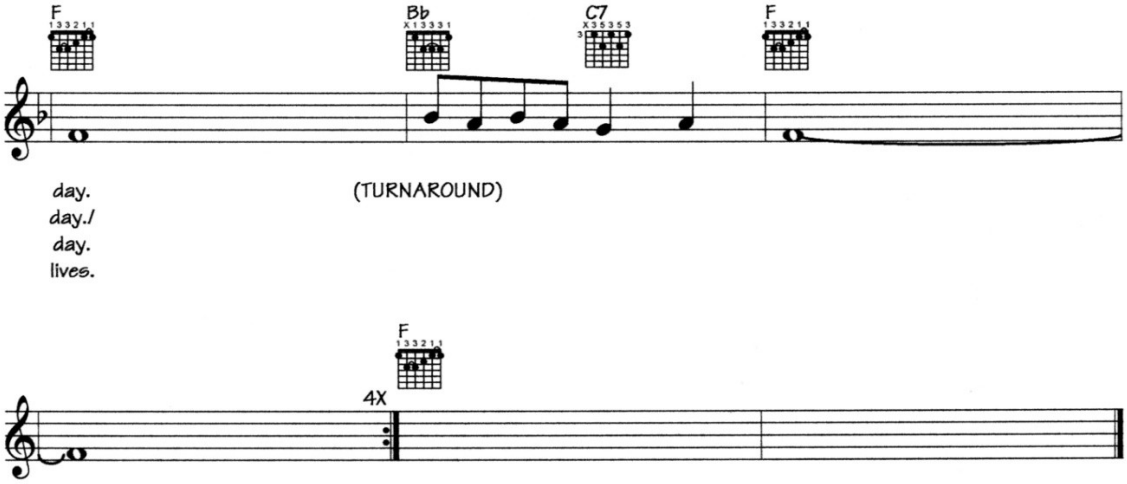
INTRO:



Ja- lyn, have a love- ly day. Have a love- ly day to-
Ja- lyn, have a hap- py day. Have a hap- py day to-
Ja- lyn, it's a spe- cial day. A ve- ry spe- cial day to-
Ja- lyn, it's a spec- ial day. A- noth- er spec- ial day to-



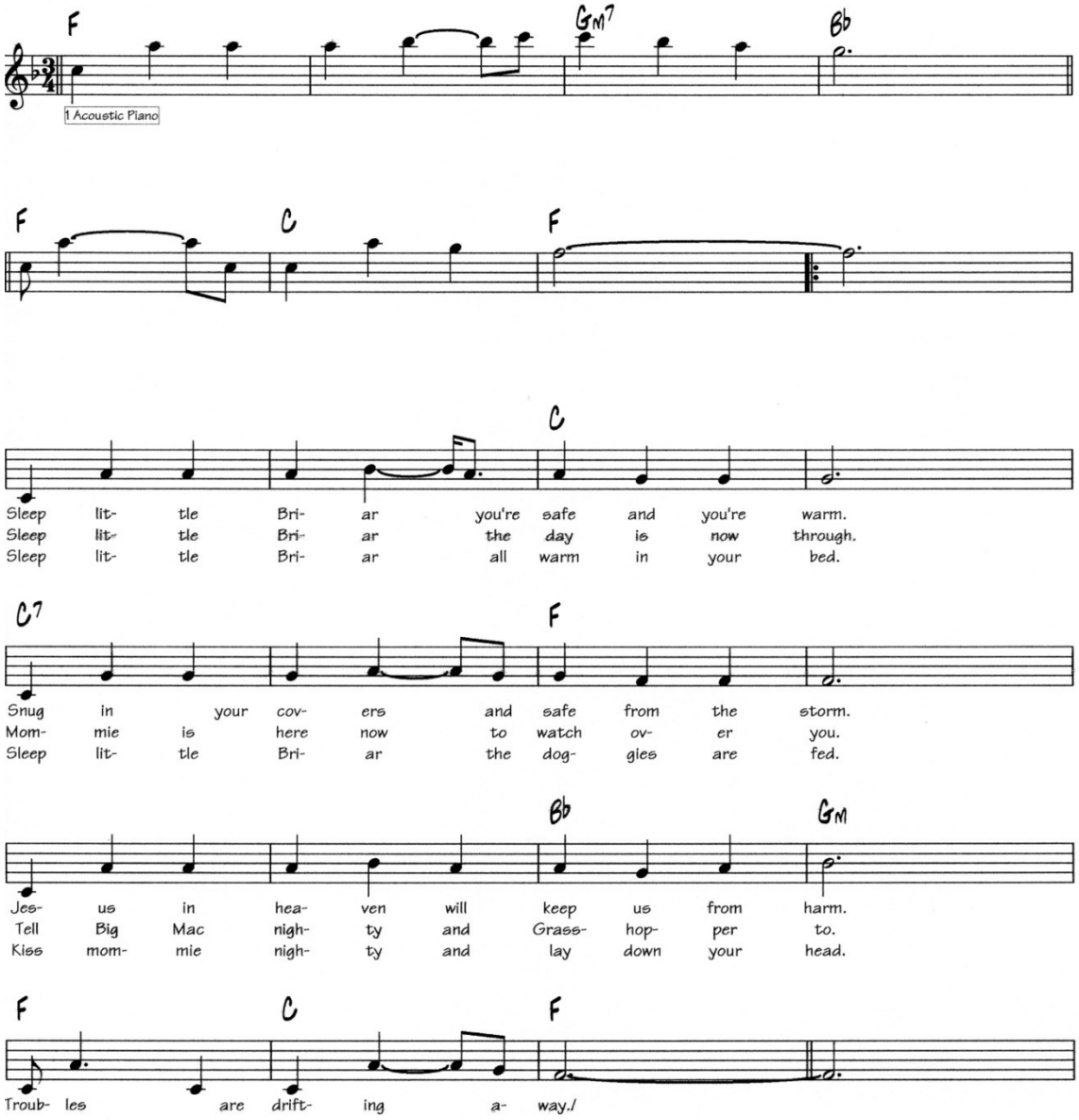
JALYN, HAVE A LOVELY LIFE - Page 2

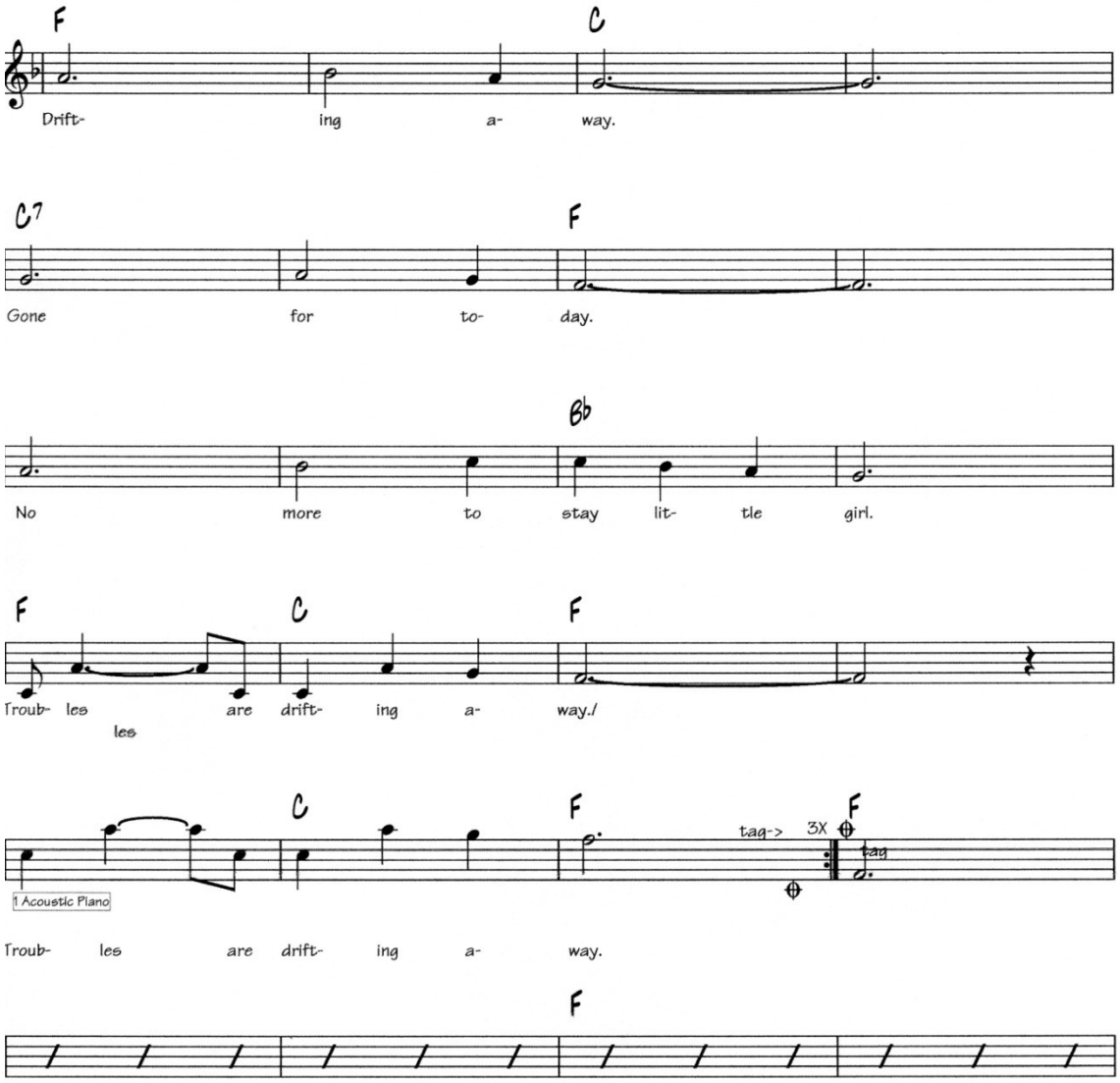

F
B♭
C7
F
day.
day./
day.
lives.
(TURNAROUND)
F
4X

BRIAR'S LULLABY SONG

By: Lyndell R Martin
© 2021 Words & Music

Tempo = 110



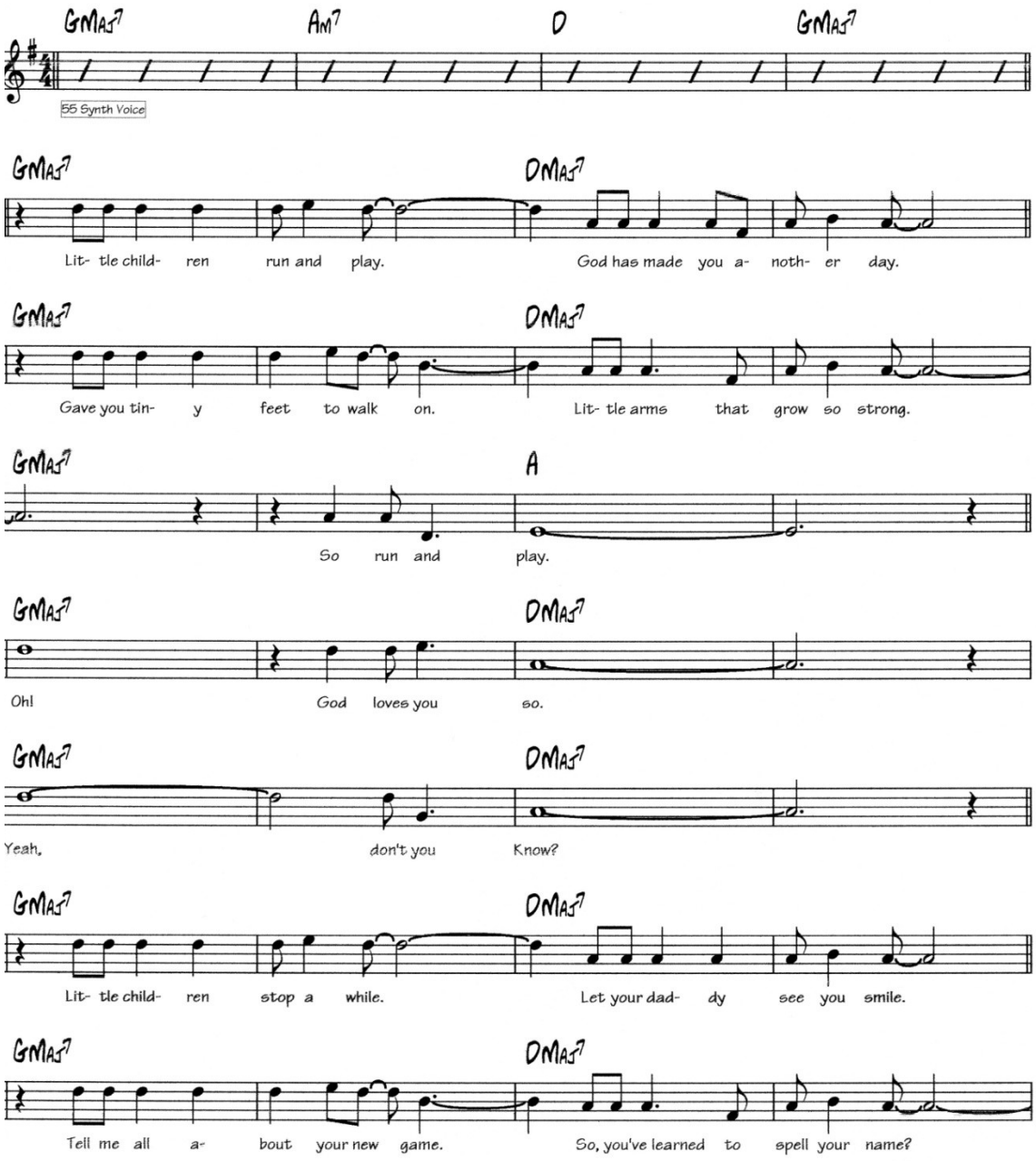


BRIAR'S LULLABY SONG - Page 2

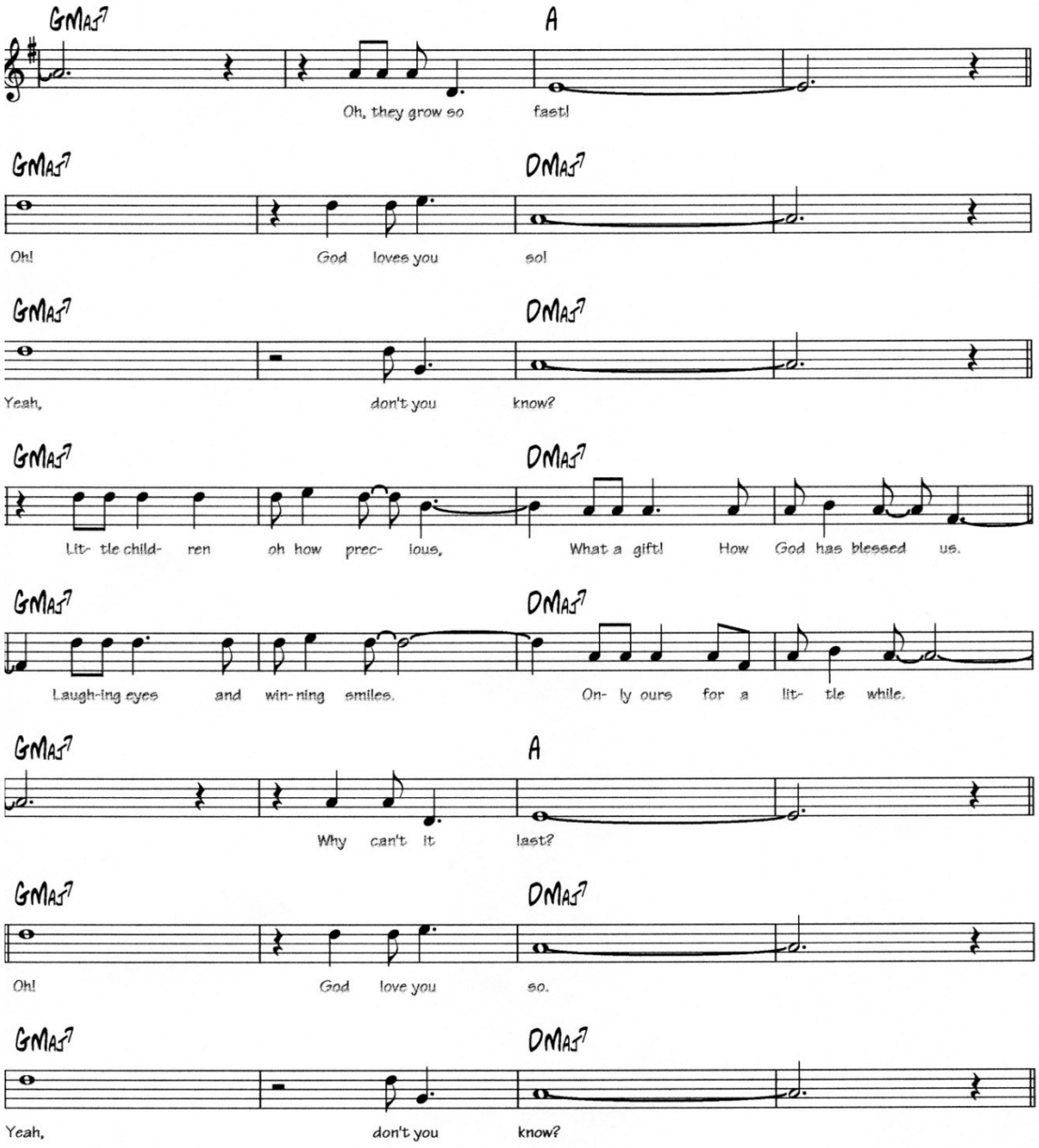
LITTLE CHILDREN

By Lyndell R Martin
© 1986 Words & Musi

Tempo = 108



©

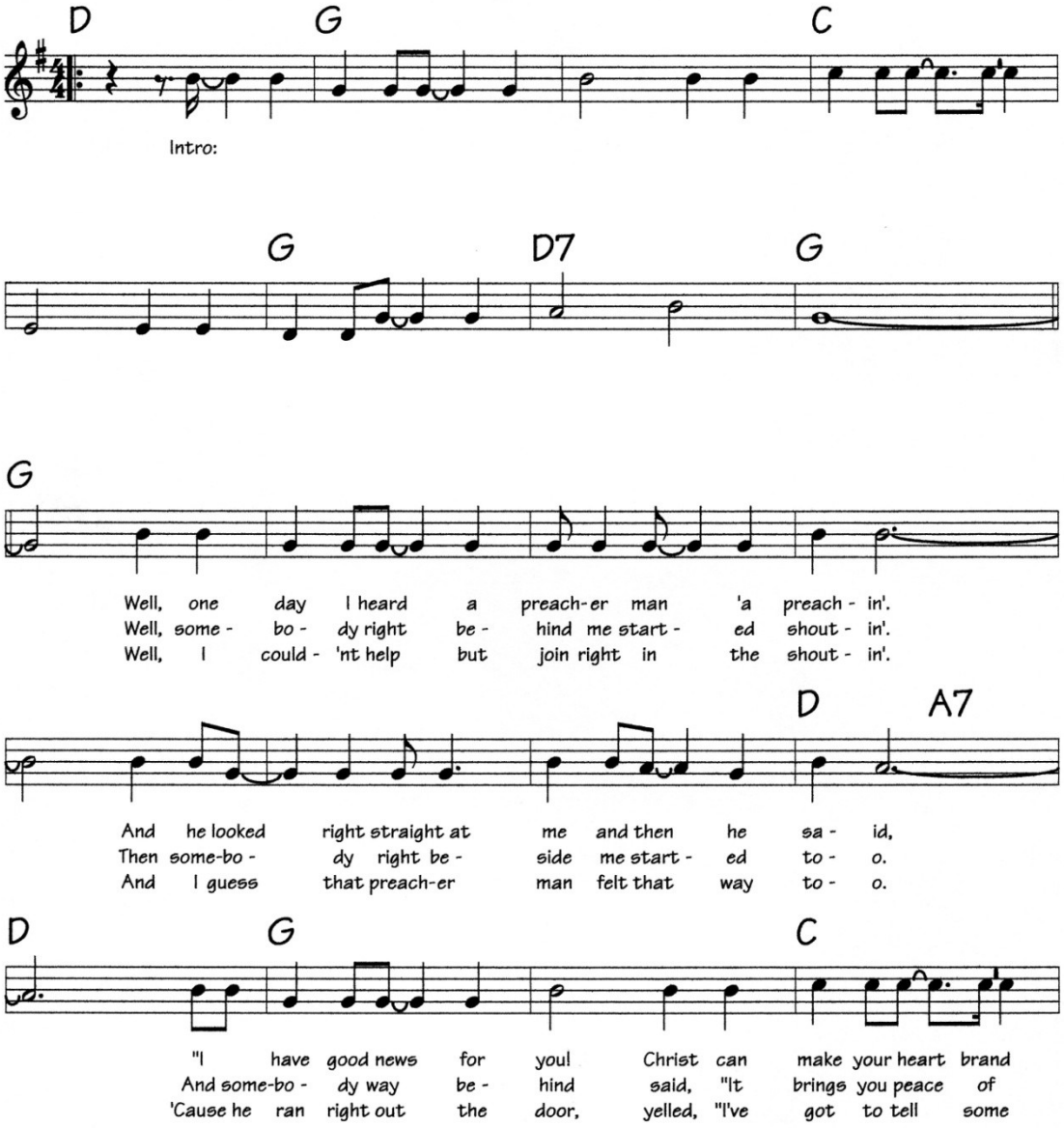


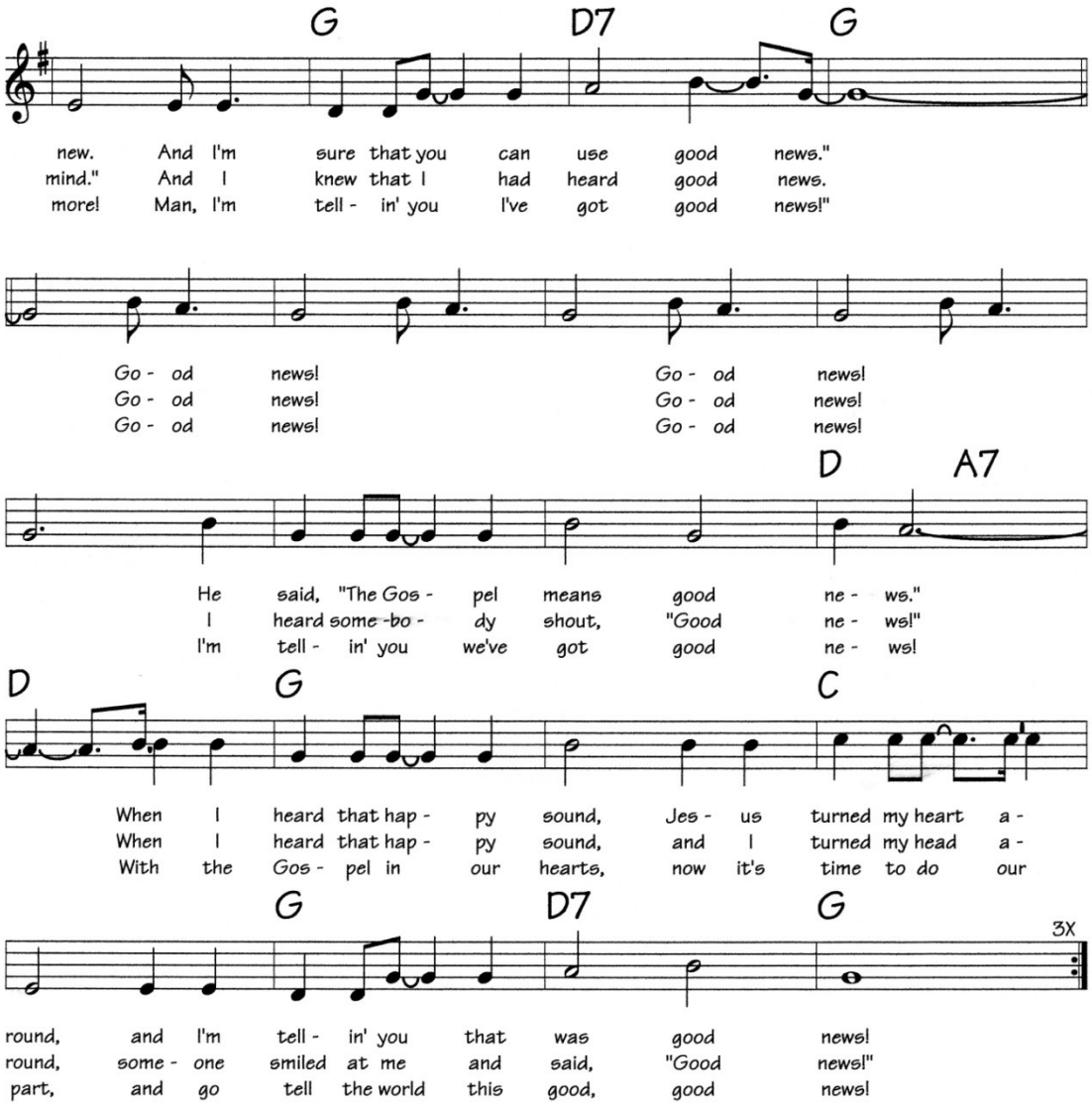
LITTLE CHILDREN - Page 2

Good News!

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1994

Tempo = 155



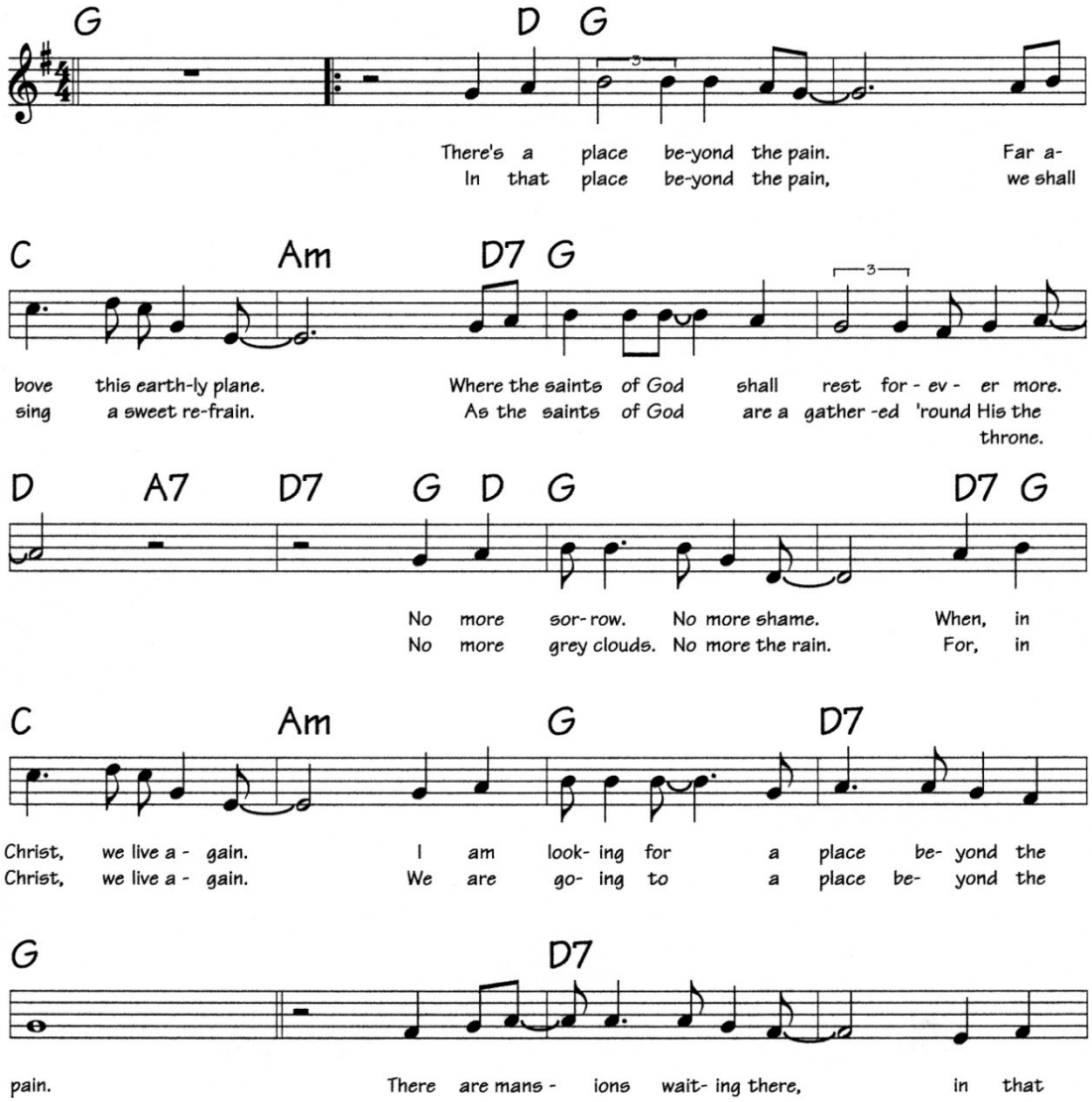


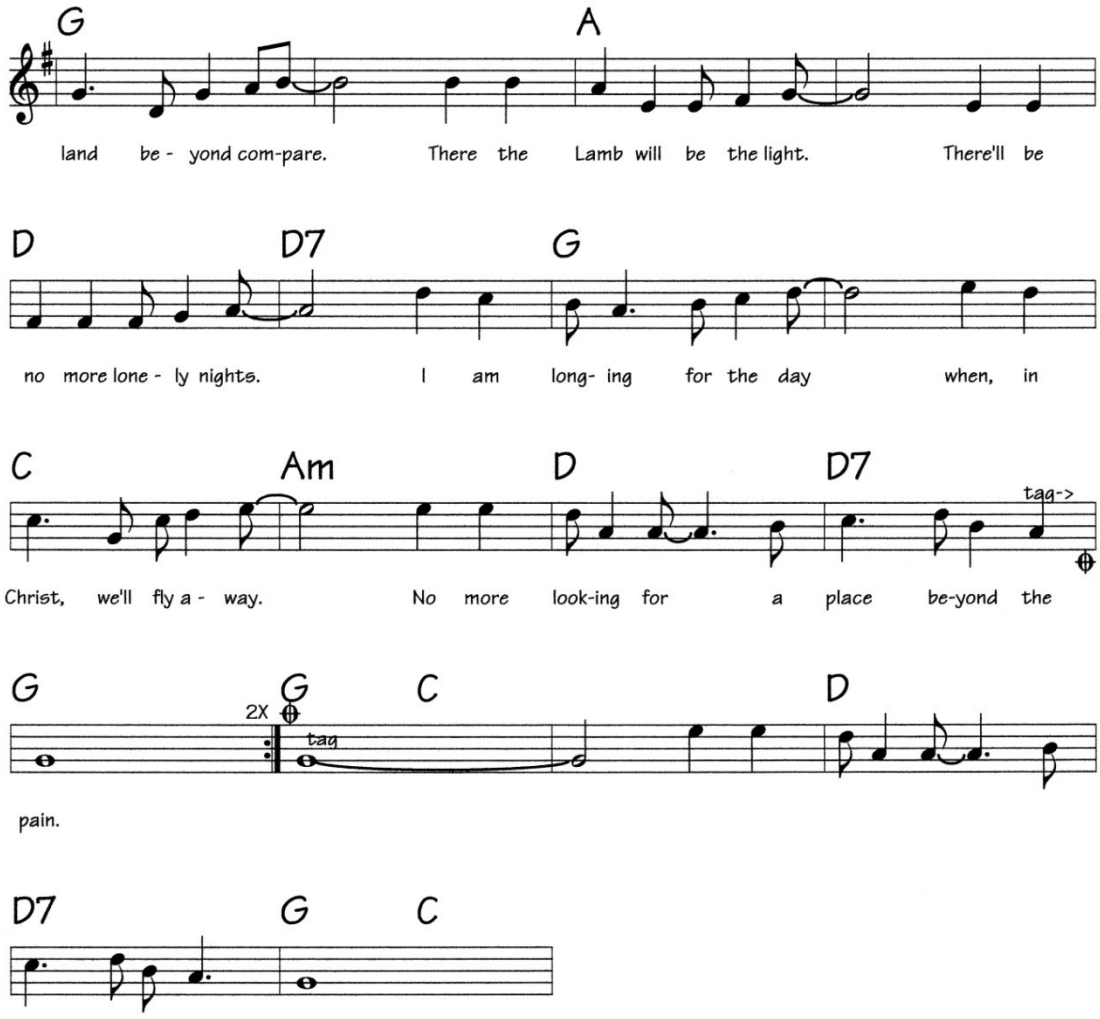
Good News! - Page 2

A Place Beyond The Pain

By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1993

Tempo = 120



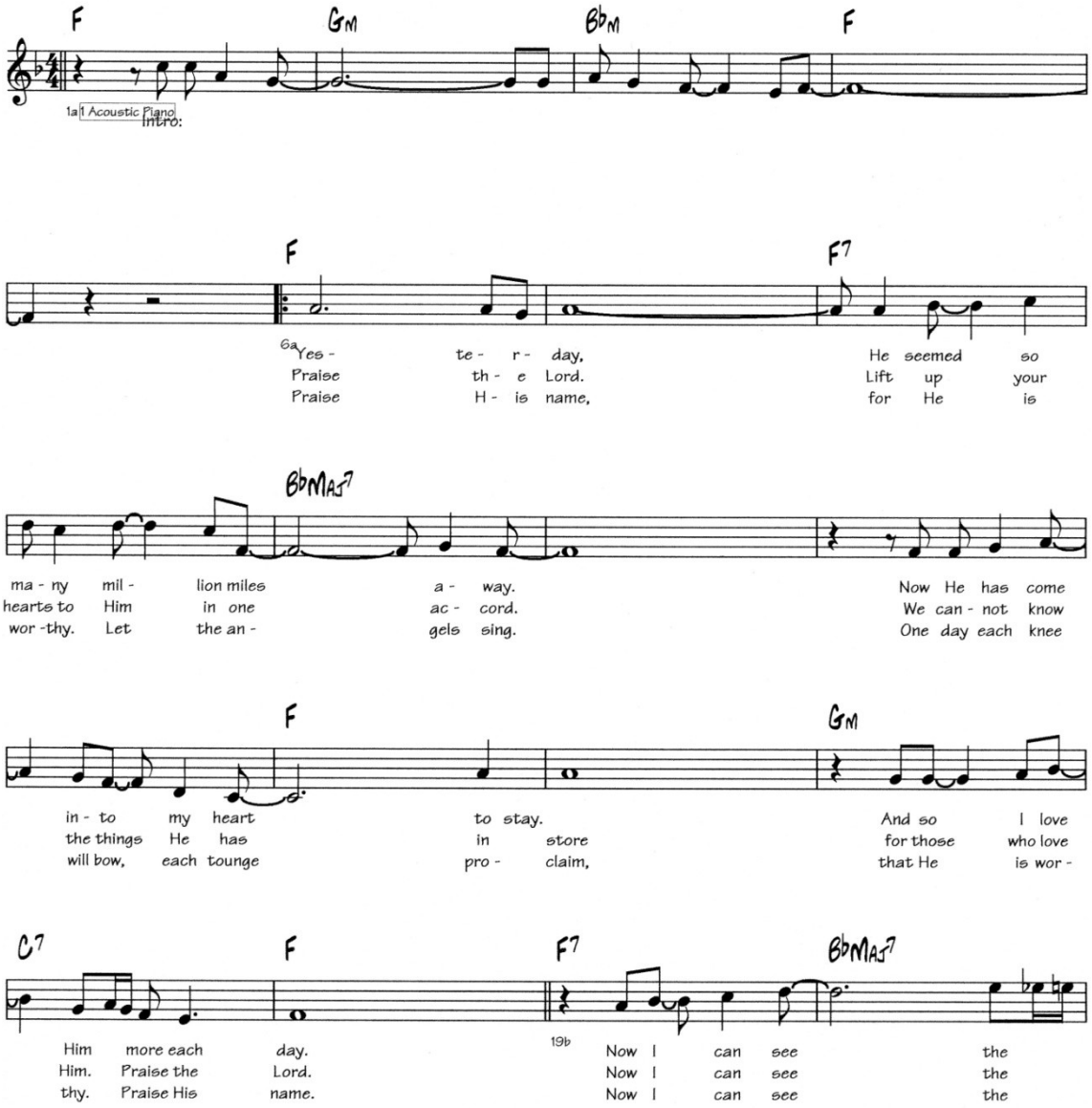


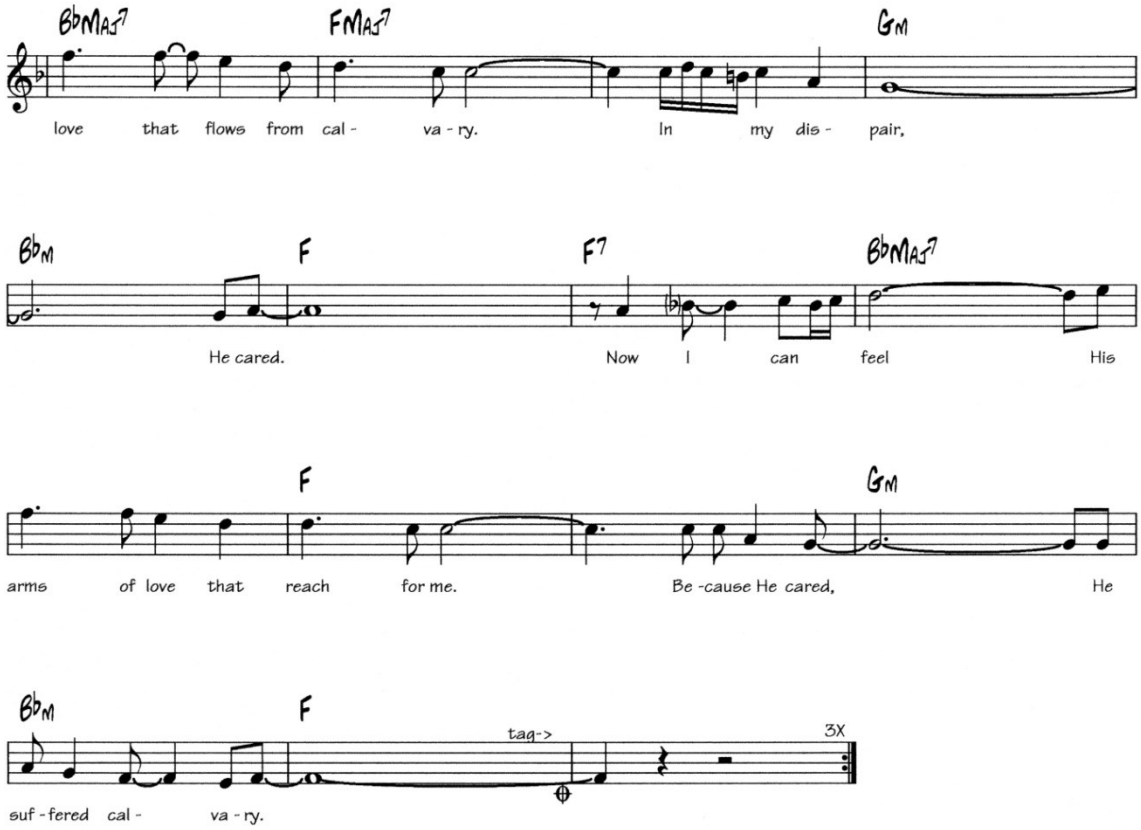
A Place Beyond The Pain - Page 2

Because He Cares

By: Lyndell R. Martin
©1982 Words & Music

Tempo = 120



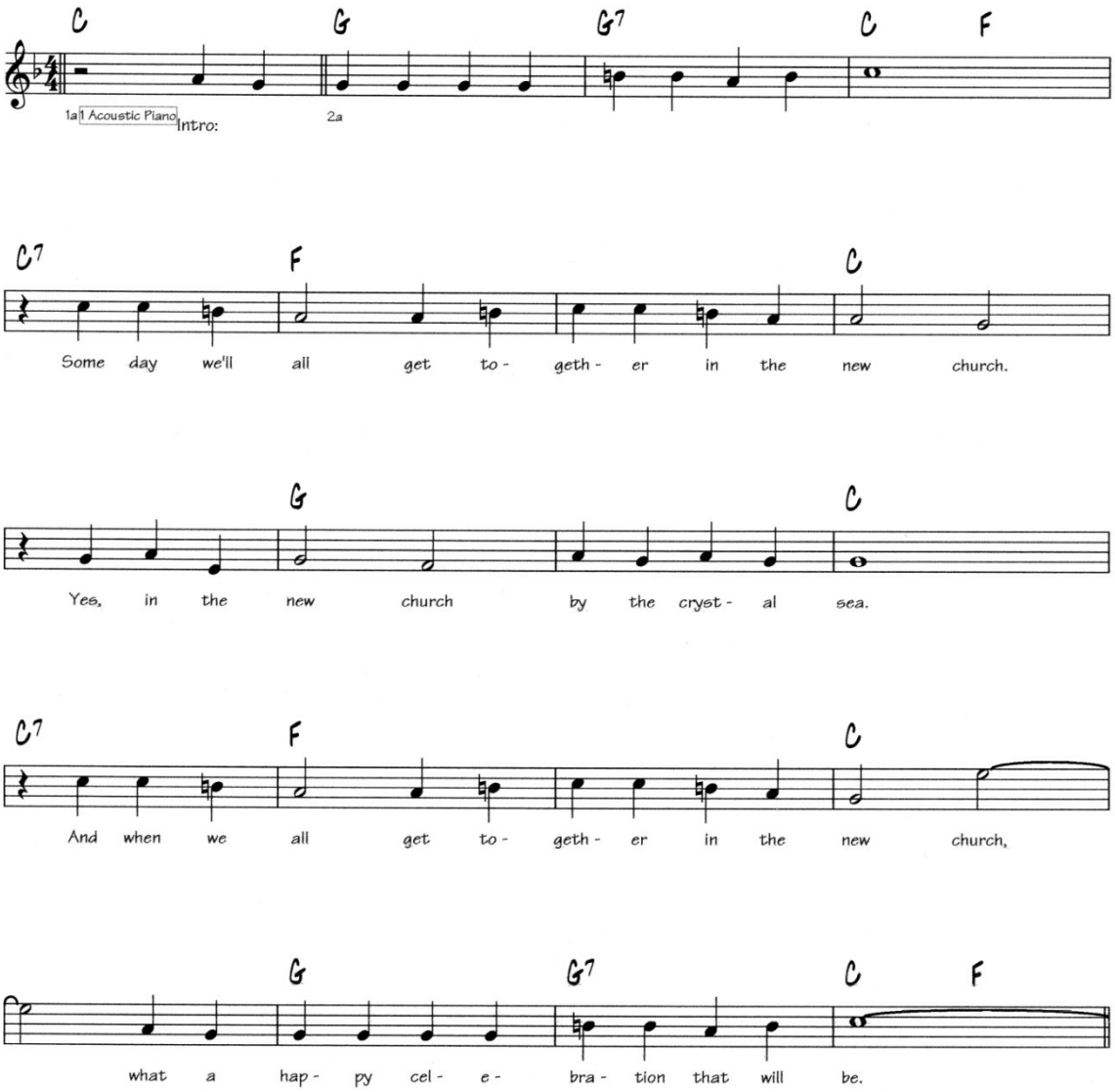


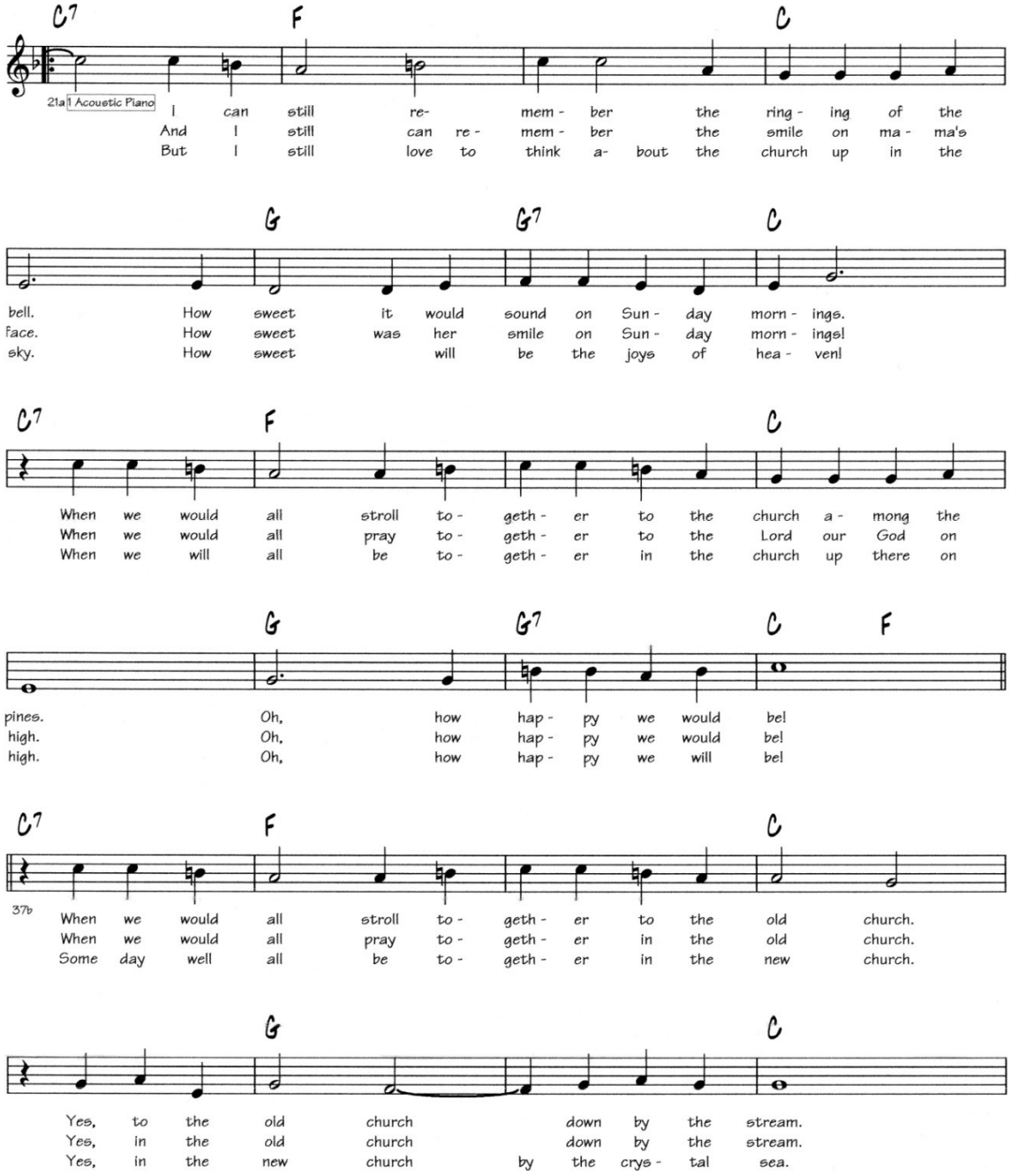
Because He Cares - Page 2

The Old Church

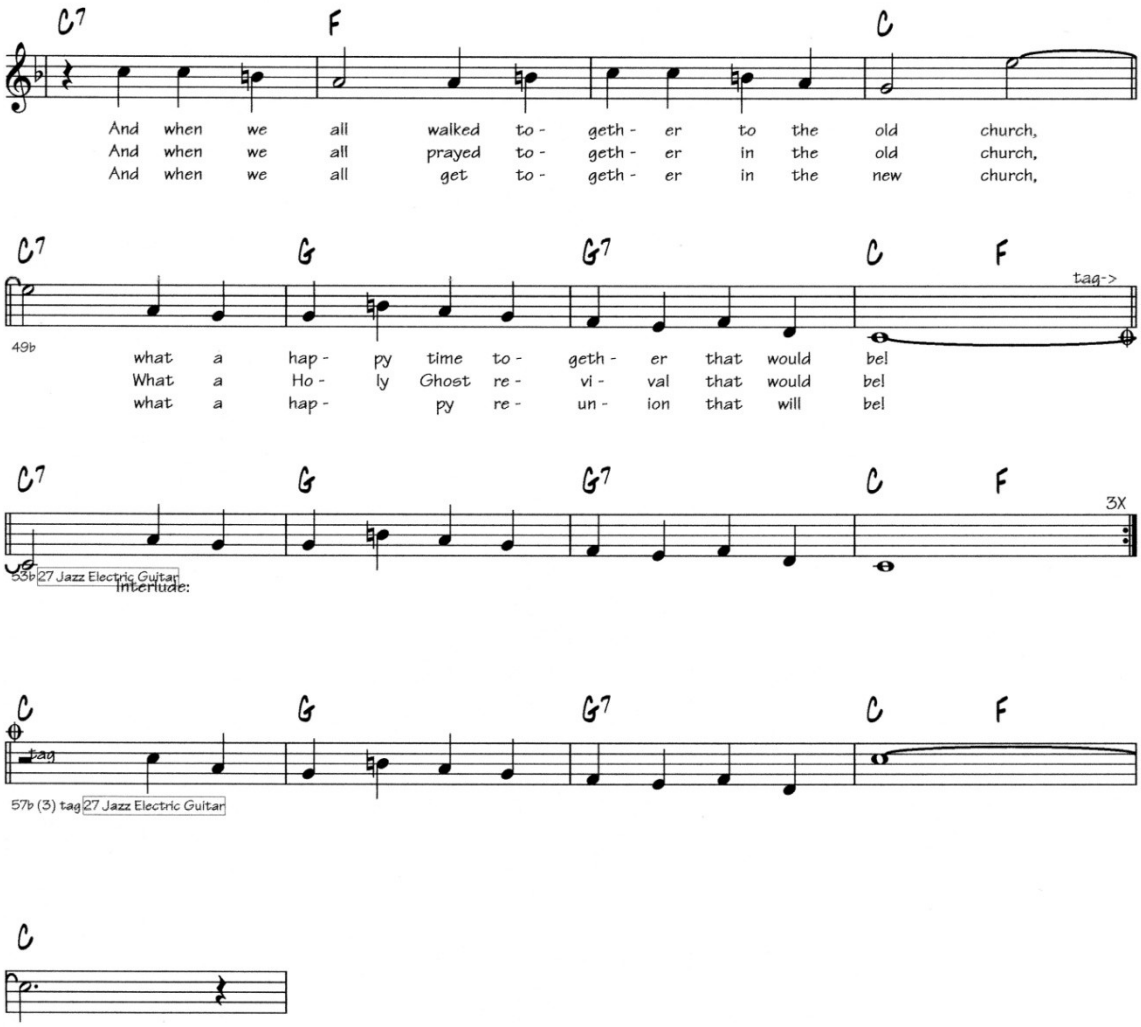
By: Lyndell R. Martin
© 1992 Words & Music

Tempo = 185





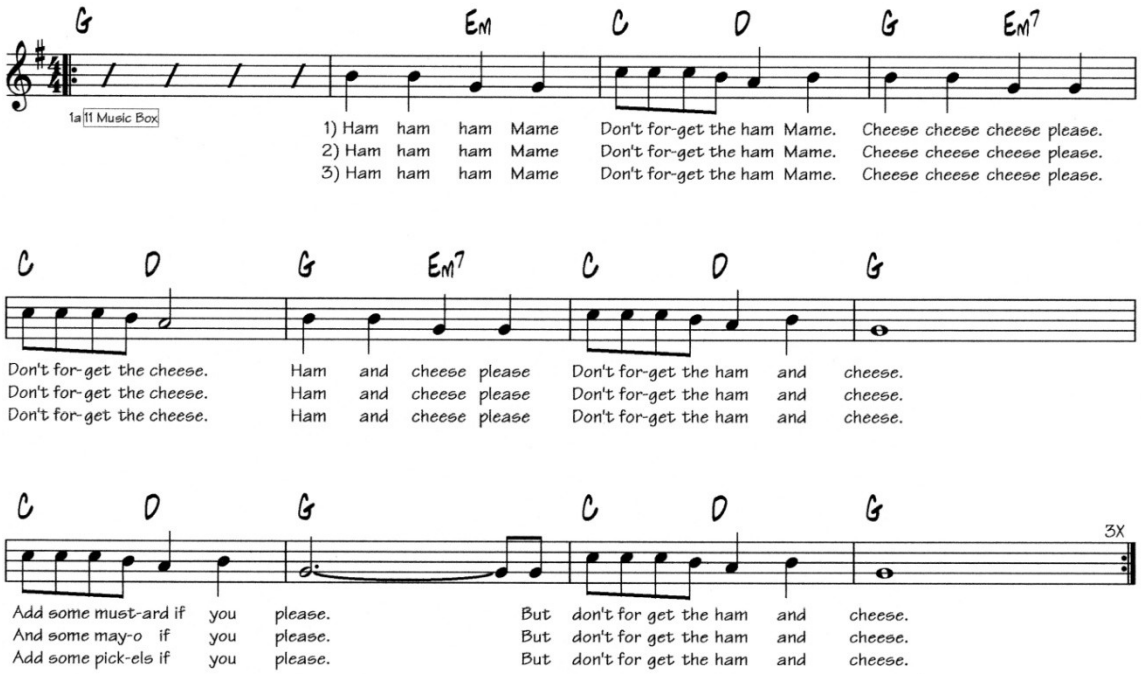
The Old Church - Page 2


C7 F C
And when we all walked to - geth - er to the old church,
And when we all prayed to - geth - er in the old church,
And when we all get to - geth - er in the new church,
C7 G G7 C F
tag->
49b
what a hap - py time to - geth - er that would bel
What a Ho - ly Ghost re - vi - val that would bel
what a hap - py re - un - ion that will bel
C7 G G7 C F
3X
55b 27 Jazz Electric Guitar
Interlude:
C G G7 C F
tag
57b (3) tag 27 Jazz Electric Guitar
C

HAM AND CHEESE

By: Lyndell R Martin
© 2019 Words & Music

Tempo = 115



Most of my professionally recorded songs are near the beginning of this appendix (F) and are marked with an asterisks (*). Other much loved songs are marked with a hash tag (#).

Appendix G
Addendums

December 20th, 2024: I am proud to report that our granddaughter, Baleigh Martin, and her fiancé, Cole Vaughn were united in marriage on December 20th, 2024! They decided to elope. I personally think this was a wise decision. I mean, just look at all the money they saved themselves!

Baleigh and Cole have since announced that they are expecting a baby girl in October! Her name will be Emmylou. They have since decided to sell their house in O'Fallon, Illinois and buy one just West of Carrier Mills, Illinois, on Tipple Road.

Note: Baleigh's mom, (Amanda), was raised by Jeff and Claudia Nolen. Claudia is Amanda's stepmother from a previous marriage. After Baleigh's mom and dad divorced, both of them subsequently remarried. Then, Amanda divorced a second time and, after that, became an unfit mother to Baleigh due to an ongoing drug issue.

Kyle and Claudia Enz consequently took Baleigh into their own home at a relatively young age. Both Kyle and Claudia became wonderful guardians to Baleigh. They filled the role of mom and dad through much of her youth, and, in many ways, still do. Sadly, Kyle and Claudia have since divorced as well.

Nevertheless, Kyle and Claudia are still playing key roles in Baleigh and Cole's lives. Kyle is a master carpenter. (Sounds a lot like my own dad, doesn't he?) Kyle helped Baleigh and Cole get their first home in O'Fallon, and, more recently, their second home in Carrier Mills. Kyle bought 100 acres adjacent to the home they are buying and has helped them get a

great deal on the house. He is now in the planning process of building himself a new house, across the road from them.

April 27th, 2025: Our grandson, Kendall Bayne Martin, was baptized today! All praise be to God!

June 14th, 2025: Mandi is working as a traveling lab tech In Washington state thru August. Jade, Sam, Briar, Birdie and all I flew out and spent a great week hosted by Mandi and Wade. They are staying in a home above a beautiful lake, just a couple of miles from the Canadian border. Naturally, we all went up into Canada for a day. I wonder where those two will go next?